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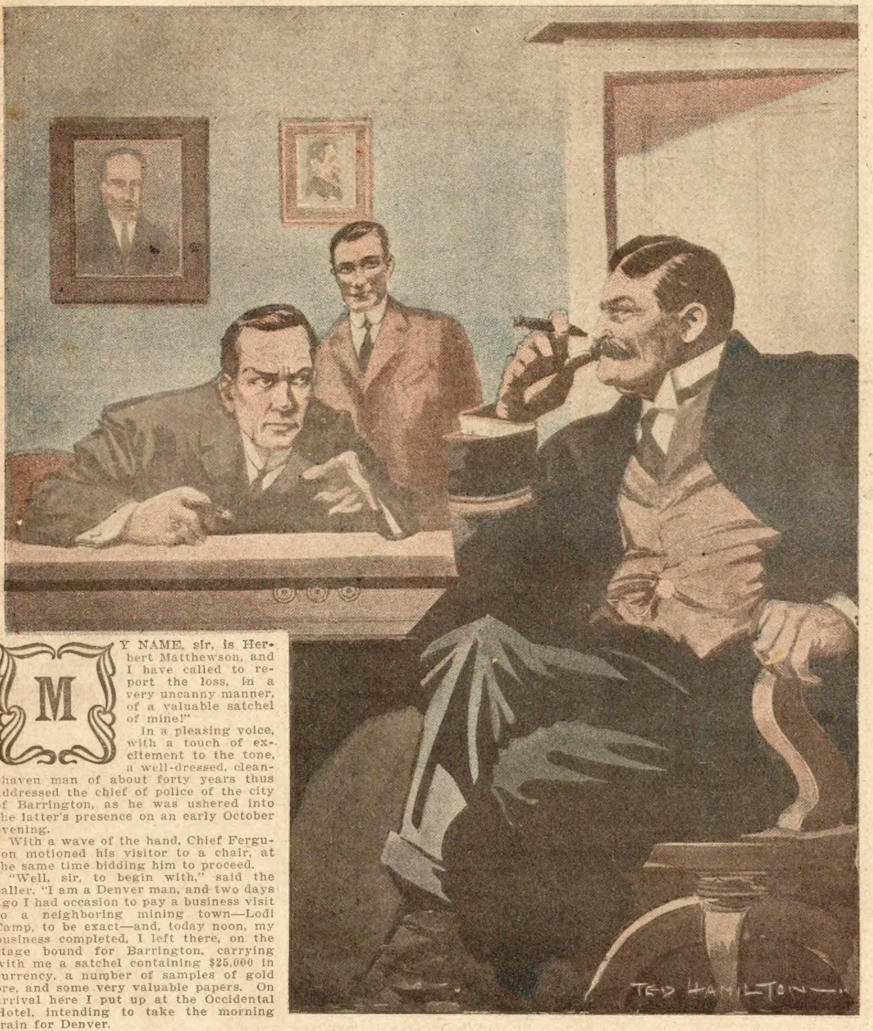
CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XL. NO. 45. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1912. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS

THE FLYING SATCHEL

Describing Phenomenal Happenings, the Supernatural Aspect of Which Gives Hair-Raising Frights to Those Involved

By ARTHUR HARRISON



"That satchel went flying out of the open window!"

"MY NAME, sir, is Herbert Matthewson, and I have called to report the loss, in a very uncanny manner, of a valuable satchel of mine!"

In a pleasing voice, with a touch of excitement to the tone, a well-dressed, clean-shaven man of about forty years thus addressed the chief of police of the city of Barrington, as he was ushered into the latter's presence on an early October evening.

With a wave of the hand, Chief Ferguson motioned his visitor to a chair, at the same time bidding him to proceed.

"Well, sir, to begin with," said the caller. "I am a Denver man, and two days ago I had occasion to pay a business visit to a neighboring mining town—Lodi Camp, to be exact—and, today noon, my business completed, I left there, on the stage bound for Barrington, carrying with me a satchel containing $25,000 in currency, a number of samples of gold ore, and some very valuable papers. On arrival here I put up at the Occidental Hotel, intending to take the morning train for Denver.

"Now, sir, I come to a most mysterious occurrence, and one that I am utterly unable to account for. Less than half an hour ago I was seated in my room in the hotel, and had my satchel open on a table therein and was examining the ore samples. Returning them to the satchel, I locked it and sat there a moment or so, gazing directly at the satchel, when, sir, believe me or not, that satchel went flying out of the open window as quick as a flash!"

"What!" gasped the chief, sitting upright. "Do you mean to tell me that your satchel of its own accord left the table and flew out the window?"

"Yes, sir; that's just what I mean, for with my own eyes I saw it go."

"Excuse me, sir," said the chief, recovering from the shock of his visitor's astounding declaration. "But haven't you—er—taken a glass too much?"

"No, sir! I am not a drinking man," retorted Mr. Matthewson, flushing with resentment.

"You say your window was open?"

"Yes, sir; the night being moderately warm for this time of the year."

"What room were you occupying at the Occidental?"

"A room on the side street on the first floor above the office."

"How far was the table from the window?"

"About five or six feet, I should judge."

"Why didn't you have the hotel clerk place your satchel in the office safe, instead of taking it to your room with you?"

"I did have it in the safe, sir, but fifteen minutes or so before it disappeared I got it out and took it up to my room to have another look at the ore samples, and just when it vanished I was contemplating returning it to the safe."

"And you say you saw the satchel go through the open window of its own accord?"

"Yes, sir; and as quick as that!" emphasized Mr. Matthewson, bringing his hands together in a single resounding clap.

"Well, all I've got to say is that there must have been a string on the satchel and a human being at the other end of the string," was the chief's retort.

"No, sir! There positively was no string attached to that satchel. As soon as I recovered a little from my surprise, I rushed to the window and looked out, but there wasn't a soul in sight in the street, and not a sign of my satchel anywhere. It had completely disappeared."

"Did you report the loss to the hotel management?"

"No, sir. I thought it best to consult the police first."

"Well, what do you expect us to do? If a live, up-to-date invisible ghost commits a robbery, I fail to see how the police can discover, let alone arrest, his ghostship."

"I do not expect to you arrest any ghost; nor did I expect you to believe my story, either, for that matter, regardless of the fact that it is strictly true in every detail. Nevertheless, I considered it my duty to report the loss, inasmuch as I can furnish an accurate description of both satchel and contents, even to the numbers and denominations of the bills that were in it."

"H'm! Well, you might sit down and write out that list," said the chief, rising from his desk to make way for the Denver man. "The best I can do,' he added, as he pressed a wall button, "is to put a man on the case, but I doubt very much if anything comes of it." Then, to the sergeant, who had answered his ring: "Is Barnes outside? All right; send him in," on the sergeant nodding in the affirmative.

Barnes, a plain-clothes man, presently entered, and to him the chief briefly stated matters, requesting that he accompany Mr. Matthewson back to his hotel and look into the affair.

Now, I, Sam Harris, a reporter on The Barrington Daily, had been an interested listener to the interview between the chief and his visitor, having dropped in for a little chat with the former a minute or two before the sergeant announced Mr. Matthewson. At the latter's entrance, I had started to leave the room, but the chief signaled me to remain, and, being a reporter, I did not need a second invitation.

After Matthewson and Barnes had departed, the chief, resuming his seat at the desk, turned to me with:

"Talk about your ghost yarns! They ain't in it with the yarn that fellow just spun!"

"According to that, chief," I replied, "it is evident that you don't take any stock in his story?"

"Stock nothing!" retorted the august head of Barrington's police force. "It's a pipe-dream, pure and simple! Just imagine a satchel upon that desk," giving a whack with a ruler on the aforesaid desk to emphasize his words, "and us looking at it, when, presto! the satchel suddenly takes wings and is gone before one can say Jack Robinson! That's more than I can swallow," and the chief settled back in his chair with a snort of disgust.

Now, in spite of the supernatural aspect of the affair, the chief's recent visitor had impressed me favorably, and, I must admit, I believed to be true every word of his remarkable narrative, and while I had no doubt but what there was trickery of some kind connected with his satchel's disappearance, I did not believe he was in any way a party to it otherwise than a victim. However, there was no use of arguing the matter with the chief, for once he had formed an opinion one might as well try to drive a nail through a solid steel beam as to try to get him to change that opinion.

"Well, chief," I finally remarked. "Any objections to my writing up this Matthewson affair for the Daily?"

"Not in the least," he replied, adding in the next breath: "Of course, Sam, my opinion lies between you and me, and is not for publication."

"That's understood, chief," I answered, as I arose to go. "Think I'll take a run over to the Occidental and see if Barnes picked up any further points."

"Guess I'll hike it for home, Sam, so I'll go out with you," said Ferguson. And bidding good night to the sergeant we passed out to the street together.

We had walked a couple of blocks in company and stood for the moment at a corner curbing preparatory to separating, when the chief drew out his watch to note the time. He had no sooner got the watch in his hand when there was a snapping sound and both watch and chain disappeared in a flash! At the same moment I felt a tug at my hand and a smarting sensation on the chin.

"Wow! Hell!" howled the chief, as he jumped back a step or two and, then stood looking at his empty hand, an expression of blank amazement on his face.

"Great Scott!" came from me. Then we both wheeled around, trying to look in all directions at once.

Beyond an auto a block down the side street, and a few pedestrians still further away on the main thoroughfare, nothing was in sight but buildings.

"Did—did you see it go, Sam?" almost shouted the chief.

"See it go?" I repeated in a daze. "Great guns! I felt something strike both my hand and chin!" and I moved a hand mechanically over my chin, only to bring it quickly away again as something warm and wet came in contact with my fingers.

"Why, my chin is bleeding!" I cried out, on looking at the hand I had just pulled away from my face, and noting blood on the fingers.

Just then I met with another surprise.

"Good Heavens, chief, my ring is gone!"

"Wha—what!" gasped my companion.

"As sure as blazes, my diamond ring has has gone to keep your watch company!"

"Holy Moses!" let out the chief just then, as he gazed at his fat paw with eyes as big as saucers. "My—my ring is gone too!"

It was a fact! The cameo ring that had adorned the little finger of the chief's right hand for as far back as I could remember was indeed missing.

There we stood, staring at each other in mute amazement—Ferguson now fumbling at his empty watch pocket, and I with a handkerchief pressed to my chin.

"Say Sam! It's spooks, as sure as you're born!" finally came from the chief, in a shaky voice, and I noticed his bulky form shiver from head to foot.

Just then I became acquainted with the fact that a clammy feeling was crawling up my back, for the spooky aspect of the thing by this time had gotten on my nerves too.

"By Jove, chief, it's no pickpocket deal we are up against! There wasn't a soul anywhere near us!" I managed to jerk out.

"Walk up to—to the house with—with me, Sam, will—will you? I—I don't feel well," stuttered the chief, grasping me by the arm.

Now, I wasn't feeling well, either—in fact, I was just as loath to part company as he was, for beneath my hat I could feel my hair standing up straight. Without making any bones about it I may as well come out with the solid truth—I was actually scared half out of my wits.

A walk of five minutes brought us to Ferguson's residence, and the chief's hands was shaking like a leaf as he proceeded to open the front door with his latchkey. Leading the way to a middle room on the parlor floor, which he had fitted up as an office, he turned on an electric bulb, and then made a beeline for a medicine cabinet that was part of the room's furnishings, bringing forth a bottle of whisky and a couple of glasses Without any consideration for propriety, he poured out a liberal dose in one of the glasses and drained it at a gulp before passing the bottle and other glass over to me.

We both began to feel better right away. The chief got out his box of cigars and we lighted up. And then the chief spoke for the first time since we had entered the house:

"Gosh, Sam, I'm glad I had that whisky handy. I never knew it to accomplish so much good before in my life as it did just now."

"You're right, chief. I was thinking that same way myself," I replied.

"Glad I got into the house without meeting my wife! wouldn't want her to see me shaking like I was when we entered."

"Looks now, Mr. Ferguson, as though Matthewson's story was true, after all," I commented, as I recalled the similarity of our own experiences to that of the Denver man's.

"By George! That's right, Sam! To tell you the truth, I really thought that fellow bughouse, but I certainly was mistaken in my opinion that time, for to believe him bughouse now I'd have to place myself in the same category. What the deuce does it all mean, anyhow?"

"Well, as near as I can figure it out," I made answer, "it means that he is out his satchel and contents, you are out your watch and ring, and I am out my ring."

For a brief spell we puffed on our cigars in silence. Suddenly the chief asked: "How's your chin, Sam?"

"It's stopped bleeding now; it fact, it was only a scratch. By the way, chief, have you got a mirror handy? I'd like to take a look at myself."

"Sure. There's a mirror in the door of that medicine chest."

I got up and went over to it. As I had said, it proved to be only a scratch, and as I noticed by the glass that my tie was disarranged, I commenced to fix it, when I paused with a short cry.

"What's the matter now, Sam?" asked the chief, rising to his feet in excitement.

"My pin! It's gone!" I gasped out.

"Holy Moses! What next! Whew! I've got to take another drink!" and the chief put his words into action and gulped down another big swallow of the whisky.

"Help yourself, Sam," motioning me toward the bottle.

And I did help myself to a second dose, for, to tell the truth, my nerves were all unstrung, and I was quaking as though with the ague. When I had calmed down a little, I said:

"Now I know, chief, how I got that scratch on the chin! It was my scarfpin that did it as it was yanked out of my tie! But what the devil yanked it out?"

"Guess you've hit it right, Sam. It was the devil! And he yanked my watch and ring at the same time!" and the chief glanced furtively around the room, as though he expected to see his Satanic Majesty make his appearance on the scene.

Then, as a sudden thought struck him, he asked: "Is your watch gone too, Sam?"

At the suggestion my hand flew to my vest. But no—it wasn't gone—for I brought it in view. It was an old-fashioned silver timepiece, but I valued it highly, it having been presented to me some years previous by an uncle, since deceased.

"It's safe, chief! My loss is apparently confined to ring and pin."

Just then the chief dived a hand into his inside coat pocket and brought to light, with a sigh of relief, his wallet.

"Thank goodness, the devil or ghost didn't take that!" he cried out.

At that I went for my own pocketbook, but also found it still in my possession.

"Well, chief, I guess we've got the full inventory," I remarked.

"It'll take a hundred and fifty dollars for me to replace my watch, chain, and ring, Sam," he grunted out, "but I'd be willing to be out that much if I could only see through the mystery."

"My loss is only a few dollars less than yours, Mr. Ferguson, but, like you, I'd be willing to lose it if I only knew the solution to the uncanny doings."

"Well, I don't think the police department will have any hand in the solving of this night's work, Sam. You can take it from me that spooks or the devil are not in our line, and I only hope that whichever one did the trick is satisfied with my contribution and gives me a wide berth hereafter," and the chief could not suppress a shudder as he spoke.

"Guess I'll get along now, Mr. Ferguson," I said after a period of silence. "You'll be better off in bed, and I've got to get down to the office and write this thing up."

"Say, Sam," whispered the chief, as he went to the front door with me, "don't give it away that I was scared, will you?"

"Hardly, chief," I whispered back. "To do that, I'd have to give myself the same dig. That part rests between us two. To the public, we are simply mystified over the phenomenal occurrences."

"That's it, Sam! That's it!" and with a hand-shake I was once more in the street.

And I dusted! Yes, I actually ran as fast as I knew how toward the office of the Daily, only slackening my speed as I got near my destination.

"What's up?" inquired the night editor, as I entered, all puffing and blowing.

"A big mystery sensation!" I replied, as I made my way to my desk.

"Hey? What?" and he came over as I squatted down in the chair.

I briefly explained matters to him as I proceeded to dope out my copy.

"Say! This isn't a fake, is it?" he finally asked.

"It's the Gospel truth," I retorted, emphatically. "Furthermore, both Chief Ferguson and Mr. Matthewson, at the Occidental Hotel, will verify it."

"Gee, Sam! It's great, if it's as you say. It's good for a triple-column headliner on the first page!" And then what must the chump do but ring up the chief's house, as though he doubted my word.

However, I couldn't much blame him for being skeptical, and pretty soon he had Ferguson on the wire. After talking with him a minute or two, he rang off and sang out:

"Sling out the copy as fast as you can, Sam! It's the greatest mystery I ever heard of, but the chief says it's straight!"

"I guess you'd think it straight, all right, all right, if you had a ring go on your finger and a pin out of your tie, as I did," I remarked between the scratchings of my pencil.

He wrote the scarehead for the article, and as fast as I would get two or three sheets of "copy" completed he would go over them and then rush them off to the composing-room, so that by the time I was on my last sheet the balance was nearly all set up on the machines. I waited till I had gone over the complete proofs, then I proceeded home and to bed.

Now, never before in my life could I have been accused of pusillanimity, but I own up to it that I was "all in" after my night's weird experience, and I shanked it home on the double-quick, and once, when a street lamp reflected my shadow, I almost screamed with fright.

Never was I so glad to get between white sheets as I was that night—or morning, properly speaking. And I actually covered my head with the bedclothes, tossing around for some time before I finally dropped off in slumber, only to be troubled with outrageous dreams of a ghostly nature. Such a night! I surely hope I will not experience another like it in a hurry.

Practically devoid of rest, I arose about eight o'clock, and was in the midst of dressing, when my sister knocked on the door and informed me that I was wanted at police headquarters, a message to that effect having just come over the telephone.

I got a move on with my toilet, gulped down a hasty breakfast, and was off in a few minutes, wondering in the meantime if something had been learned that would in any way explain the previous night's doings, thus accounting for the chief telephoning to me.

"Perhaps," I thought, "Barnes has solved the mystery!" as I recalled the plain-clothes man whom the chief had told to look into the matter of the missing satchel.

I had expected to be questioned by the folks before I left the house, but it was quite evident that they had not looked at the morning Daily up to my appearance, for they had made no comment. Arriving at my destination, I immediately gained audience with the chief, and was on the point of asking him what Barnes had discovered, when he blurted out:

"Say, Sam! Matthewson, you and I are not the only victims of the devil last night! At least half a dozen have been here already this morning to report their loss, in the same manner as our own, of watches and rings!"

"Whew! Is that so, chief?" I answered, with a whistle of surprise, as it dawned on me that the information conveyed was contrary to what I had calculated on, and was only adding to the mystery instead of lessening it.

"Yes, sir! That's a fact!" replied Ferguson. "And, between you and me, Sam, I'm blame glad of it. Not glad that our fellow citizens lost their property, by any means; but glad that we have lots of company in our spooky experience, for it helps verify our own statements; otherwise I'm afraid that we'd have come in for some ridicule by the weekly papers in town.

"It seems," he went on, "that these other victims," mentioning a list of names, "had one and all decided to keep their experience to themselves, not taking kindly to the idea of being made a laughing stock of by everybody, which they figured would be the case if they told their tales. However, when they read your writeup in this morning's Daily, they deemed it their duty to come here and add their testimony to ours. And every single one of them owned up to it that they were scared almost out of their wits by the strange and uncanny manner in which they had been relieved of their property. I'll bet they all got the worst night's rest last night that they ever got in their lives. They clearly showed it in their faces. And, Sam, between you and me, I was in the same boat, for I don't believe I got a wink of sleep the whole night long. But, to continue, as there are nine of us, thus far, that can swear to this ghostly highway robbery business, I don't think the public will be so inclined now to give us the laugh."

"Hardly," I made response. "And, like you, chief, I'm glad we've got companions in misery. But, for the life of me, how are we to get at the bottom of the mystery?"

"We'll never get to the bottom of it, Sam. You can make up your mind to that. As I said last night, it's either the work of ghosts or the devil. And there's no human power on earth that understands either one!" and the chief shook his head seriously, as though he had formed the only conclusion that could be formed to account for the miraculous doings.

"And, Sam, do you know," he added a moment later, lowering his voice to barely a whisper. "Last night, if it hadn't been for the fact that you were up against it as well as me, I would have thought it was retribution coming my way for not believing Matthewson's story!"

Ordinarily I would have laughed at such a statement from a man in his position; but there was no laugh forthcoming now, for I was too deeply impressed myself with the spooky aspect of the thing, and was as superstitious concerning the affair as he was, although heretofore I had never believed that I had a superstitious bone in my body.

Now, any one that puts us down for arrant cowards, under the circumstances, is away off in his calculation, for if the strongest-nerved man in existence wouldn't have been just as scared as we were, if it had been his experience instead of ours, I much miss my guess.

Just then we heard the telephone ring, and Ferguson went out to answer it. He returned in a few minutes, with the announcement that it was Matthewson on the wire.

"Gave me his congratulations," explained the chief. "Said he'd read the morning paper, and was pleased to learn that I had received a dose of the same medicine that was given him, because maybe now I'll believe his story. Says he'll stay in town for the present, in hopes that something will turn up relative to his missing satchel."

Well, I could hardly blame Matthewson for feeling sore over the matter, for I knew that I would have felt sore myself to have my word doubted when I was speaking nothing but the truth.

"By the way, chief," I remarked. "What did Barnes learn by his hotel visit? Anyway?"

"Absolutely nothing. Said the only solution he could form in the matter was that Matthewson was nutty," and the chief actually grinned for the first time since his watch had done the disappearing act. Probably it recalled his own opinion to mind.

As there was nothing to be gained by further conversation on the subject, I decided to take my leave and go to the Daily office. Inasmuch as I had not as yet glanced at the morning paper, I was somewhat anxious to get by myself, so that I could see how the thing showed up in cold type. So I bade adieu to the chief and made my way to the street. I had just started off in a brisk walk, when a voice in my rear shouted:

"Hold on, Harris! You're just the chap I want to see!"

I glanced back, to note an auto stopping in front of headquarters, in which was seated Joe Carroll, a young fellow of about twenty, and with whom I was slightly acquainted.

"Why, hello, Carroll!" I retorted, going up to the auto as he jumped out.

"I've got your ghost cornered, old man!" was his return salutation.

"What's that?" I answered, somewhat sharply.

"Just what I say, Harris. I've got your ghost cornered. In other words. I've read the account in the Daily of your last night's ghostly experience, and I thought I'd drop around and let you and the chief know how it all happened, and, incidentally, to tell you that your lost property is safe and will be returned to you as soon as my father returns home; in fact, I'm expecting him on the morning train."

"What the deuce are you talking about, Carroll? Do you mean to say that you captured a ghost and recovered my ring and pin? And, if so, what has your father got to do with it when he's out of town?" and I stood practically bewildered.

"Now, don't fire all those questions at me at once, Harris, for I can only answer one at a time, you know. However, to save breath, suppose we go inside and see Mr. Ferguson, and then one explanation will do for the both of you," and he grabbed me by the arm and hustled me inside before I could make any retort.

On seeing me back so quickly the chief started to say something, but was forestalled by Carroll, who cried out:

"I want to have a little private talk with you and Mr. Harris, chief, on a very important matter. Is it convenient?"

Ferguson signified that it was "convenient," and led the way into the private office.

"It's about last night's mysterious doings, chief," opened up Joe as we became seated.

Ferguson was interested at once.

"Now," continued Joe Carroll, "I am here to explain the apparently phenomenal happenings of last night, and also tell you that everything that was supposed to have been stolen by spook robbers, from you and the rest of the temporary victims, is in my possession and will be returned to their relative owners as soon as it is within my power."

Well, say, you could have knocked the chief over with a feather just then.

"The devil!" he cried out. "How was it done? And how comes it that you have the lost property?"

"Cut out the questions, chief, and let me tell the yarn in my own way, and we'll get there all the quicker," was Joe's retort. Thereupon the chief closed up, like the proverbial clam, and Carroll continued:

"To begin at the beginning, the both of you are acquainted with my father. Isn't it so?"

Ferguson nodded and I assented.

You both know that he's been connected with mines and mining for the past twenty years or more, as prospector, assayer, and expert?"

Again we nodded our assent.

"Now, probably what you don't know is the fact that the old man has a workshop in the house, which is loaded down with contrivances of various kinds that he uses or has used in his business. Furthermore, some of those contrivances are of his own invention and no one understands their use or operation but himself. Well, last night, about eight o'clock, Alice—my sister, you know—asked me to get out our auto and take her for a little spin. So I went out to our garage, in the rear of the house, after the machine, which had not been used since I motored father down to the depot three days ago, when he went off on a business trip. In getting out the auto I noticed a package on the rear seat and opened it, wondering what it could be and how it had got there. When I had it unwrapped I saw that it was one of father's contrivances, which he had evidently intended to take with him when he went away, but by some oversight had forgotten at the last moment and left in the auto.

"Now, I didn't understand the infernal thing and should have kept my hands off, but, like the inquisitive kid that put his foot through the head of his drum to find out what made the noise, my curiosity got the better of me and I had to pull a lever on the blasted thing. Well, I couldn't push that lever back to save my life. I tried, and I tried, but I couldn't budge it. Not hearing any sound from the interior of the machine, I concluded that it didn't make any difference, anyway, whether the lever was on or off, so dropped it back on the seat, intending to leave it in the house when I went in after my sister. But when I got the auto in front of the house I found Alice on the stoop, all ready to go, and she hopped in the front seat with me and we started off, that little contrivance on the rear seat passing completely out of my mind.

"We were only out for about an hour, and, on returning, after putting the auto into the garage, I went in the house to keep mother and sister company, once more forgetting that little machine, happening to think of it, I went out to the garage with the express purpose of getting it and bringing it into the house, for I didn't want anything to happen to it, not knowing what value my father placed on it.

"Well, chief," continued the narrator, without any interruption on our part, "you and Sam here may have got the surprise of your lives last night, but I want to tell you right now that I got the surprise of my life this morning when I went out to that auto," and the speaker paused for a moment as though to get his wind; then resumed, with a chuckle:

"That's what I did, all right, all right! Got the surprise of my life—for lying on the seat of the auto, on both sides of the little machine of father's, was a collection of half a dozen watches, the same number of chains—some broken in two—and as many rings, two scarfpins, and a black satchel, and——"

"What!" howled the chief, interrupting Joe, and bounding out of his chair.

As for myself, I was so dumb with surprise that for the moment I could only sit there and blink, for I was unable to utter a word.

"Take it cool, chief! Take it cool!" commented Joe. "I'll be through in a minute, and then you can fire away all you want to. Now, when I discovered all that jewelry, et cetera, I just wondered what it all meant, and I reached out my hand to pick some of it up. But—would you believe it?—I couldn't budge a thing! I could touch every one of the articles, but I couldn't move them a hair's breadth from their position on that cushion seat!"

"Whew!" at last I managed to splutter out.

"Well, I'll be d—d!" came the chief's pet phrase when anything stumped him.

"No, sir!" went on Carroll without heeding the interruptions. "I couldn't budge a thing; and, not only that, but I couldn't lift out that little machine of father's, either. It seemed as though it had got nailed fast to the seat during the night, for I was unable to move it the slightest particle in any direction. Just then I noticed a little slip of paper pasted on the contrivance, on which was written in my father's hand, these words: 'If anything goes wrong, cover with rubber blanket!' And that's what I did—covered the whole shooting match with a rubber blanket. Then I went in the house to think the matter over, and happening to pick up the Daily, immediately noticed the article about the ghostly experiences of you two gentlemen and a Mr. Matthewson; and then it came over me like a flash that father's bloomin' little apparatus was the invisible spook that yanked the valuables and created all the rumpus! But there must be other victims besides those mentioned in Sam's article, for I'll be bound that you two didn't lose any six watches, let alone all the rest of the jewelry?" and the speaker stopped short.

"That's right! There were other victims," answered the chief, coming back to earthly existence, for the disclosures, figuratively speaking, had practically carried him up in the air. "But what the dickens does it all mean?"

"Yes," I managed to chip in, recovering somewhat from the hazy condition in which I had been thrown by Carroll's remarkable disclosures. "What's the answer?"

"You can search me," replied Joe. "All I know is that that little contrivance of father's has got some magnetic power about it that must have yanked all those contributions during the short time that Alice and I were riding around in the auto. Beyond that fact I am as much in the dark as yourselves. How it does it, and does it so noiselessly that my sister and myself, sitting only a couple of feet in front of it at the time, heard nothing, I don't know; but I'll bet that my father can clear up the missing links as soon as he returns."

"When do you expect your father back, Joe?" asked the chief, now having calmed down to normal.

"On the train due here at 10:30 this morning."

"Well, it's just turned ten now," said Ferguson, glancing at the wall clock after a fruitless fingering at his vest pocket. "So he'll be at the station in half an hour if he comes on that train."

"By the way, Joe," said I. "Have you got that freak museum outside; or is that another auto than the one you used last night?"

"Same one, old man. And the freaks are all there, duly covered up with the rubber blanket."

"Let's go out and inspect," suggested the chief.

Sure enough! When the blanket was raised there were exposed to view all the articles enumerated by Joe Carroll. I recognized my ring right off and, forgetting about Joe's claim that none of the things were movable, I reached out my hand to pick it up. But I didn't. I could touch it all right, but I couldn't budge it to save my neck! I paused, and gazed at it in astonishment, while Carroll stood by, grinning at me.

Just then the chief spotted his watch, and, in spite of my experience, what must he do but reach over and attempt to grab it. Attempt is about as far as he got, for it was as immovable as my ring!

"Well, I'll be d—d!" he ejaculated in amazement.

"No use! Both of you will have to wait for your little ornaments till the old man arrives and sets them free," said Joe, with a sardonic grin.

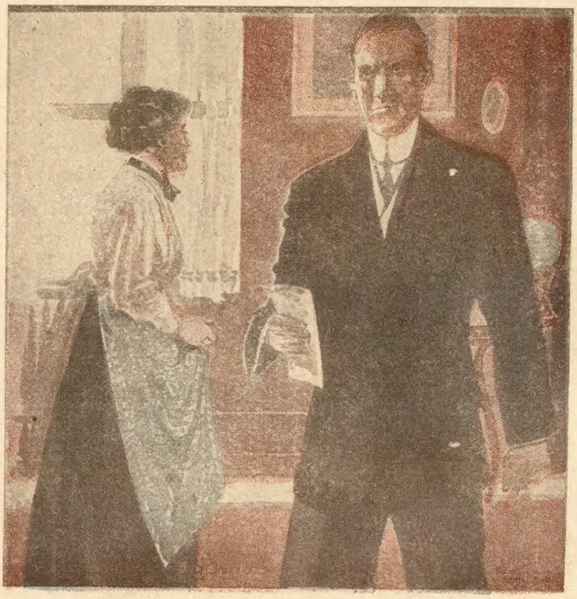
And now I thought to take a look at the devil's imp of a contrivance which had been the means of making me become a believer temporarily in spooks and thus frightening me half out of my shoes. And this is what I saw:

A metal box about eight inches square and not over four inches high, with a lever pivoted from the center and ten little brass spots in a semicircle on one-half of the top surface, and four little knobs sticking up on the other half. The tip end of the lever was over the last spot to the right, and these spots and lever reminded me very much of a starting box as used in connection with an electric motor. Then Joe explained that the lever had been on the other end of the spots before he had monkeyed with it, and he reached over and showed us that it couldn't be shoved back.

By this time it was twenty minutes past ten, and Joe suggested that the chief get his hat and go along in the auto to meet the train and the elder Carroll. "And you, too, Harris," he added. "Provided you can squeeze in somewhere on that rear seat—the front seat, you know, only holds two."

"It's all right, Carroll," I replied. "But is it's the same to you, I'd rather hoof it to the depot than to share the seat with that devil's instrument!"

And hoof it I did, for I certainly wanted to be "in" on the final denouement; not because I was a quidnunc, by any means; but because I was personally involved in the matter for one thing; and then—well, I was a reporter, and, like any other reporter, was dependent on "news" to hold down my job.



I was wanted at police headquarters.

The depot was almost half a mile from police headquarters, and I had barely got there and joined the chief and Joe on the platform when the train came snorting in. Simultaneously we espied the senior Mr. Carroll emerging from one of the cars. He shook hands with all three, and then Joe led him to the auto and briefly explained the ghostly doings of his infernal instrument.

"My boy," he remarked to his son, "this will teach you the lesson hereafter not to handle that which you don't understand!" And with that he threw back the rubber cover, pressed down on one of the four little knobs on the machine, and the lever immediately snapped to the other end of the spots.

"Now, chief," he said. "Pick out your property; and you, Sam," turning to me, "pick out yours."

We both did as directed, and the articles came away in our fingers as naturally as could be; only the chief found his chain in two parts, but the watch was as perfect as when it flew out of his hand the night before, and, wonders of wonders, it was not only ticking, but registered ten forty—the exact time—showing that it hadn't stopped a single minute in spite of the adventure it had been through.

Mr. Carroll, senior, then took all the other watches and jewelry and distributed them upon his person, dropping Matthewson's satchel, as well as his own, in the bottom of the car, and got in the rear seat with the chief, while I got up alongside Joe, and five minutes' later we were once more at police headquarters.

Adjourning to the chief's private office, Joe's father then and there explained the extraordinary workings of his—as he called it—"Magnetic Metal Attractor;" first unloading his pockets of the surplus jewelry and placing the same, together with Matthewson's satchel, upon the chief's desk.

"Now, gentlemen," he commenced, as he laid his instrument upon a small table that was in the office, "while I am not at all pleased to be obliged to explain to you the merits of this little Magnetic Metal Attractor, which happens to be of my own invention, and which I have found very useful to me in my business; still, under the circumstances, it is no more than right that the apparently mysterious doings for which my machine, it seems, is responsible, be cleared up regardless of the fact that I had hoped to keep my invention a secret.

"What the machine is intended to accomplish—and does accomplish—is this: It can be set to act as a powerful magnet for the attraction of either gold, silver, or copper, weighing in one piece fifty pounds or less, from a distance of as much as one hundred feet. You see here four knobs," pointing them out, "and here you see ten gold spots in a semicircle, and here a lever the end of which moves directly over the spots. Now, each one of these spots represents a distance of ten feet in the magnetic drawing power of the instrument. That is, by pressing down on knob number one and moving the lever over the first gold spot it will attract to the machine anything bearing gold in its composition from within a distance of ten feet. By moving the lever to the second spot it increases the drawing power to twenty feet, and so on up to one hundred feet, increasing the magnetic drawing power ten feet for every move of the lever to the spot ahead. Now, by pressing down knob number two instead of number one, and operating the lever, it acts on silver precisely the same manner, and knob number three makes the machine work on the same principle in regard to copper. Knob number four is the releaser. By pressing it the lever flies back to its starting point, and the machine is devoid of magnestic attraction. Or, by covering it with a rubber blanket when set it also can be rendered powerless as a magnet.

"Now, while it will draw a watch, for instance, from a distance of one hundred feet, quicker than I can snap my fingers, it will not injure the watch in the least particle. The reason for this being that the instrument, when in operation, is guarded by a cushion of air that not only prevents the watch from coming within six inches of the Attractor, but drops the watch down as gently as though laid down carefully by human hand.

"One peculiar feature of the Attractor, is that when in operation and resting on a surface, once it has attracted any metal within its power, the machine itself is as immovable as the object that got caught within its meshes, and, like the metal, cannot be budged from its position until the releaser is pressed down, which sets both free. Another peculiar feature of the magnet part of the instrument is the fact that when set to attract gold it will not disturb either silver or copper, and——"

"No wonder you held on to your watch, Sam!" interrupted the chief.

"Vice versa," went on Mr. Carroll. "While the Attractor will not attract through glass, wood, masonry, or rubber; nor budge copper, silver, or gold that weighs in one piece over fifty pounds; it will attract through movable cloth or leather, which is clearly demonstrated by this satchel here," pointing to Matthewson's handbag, "which must contain gold—otherwise it wouldn't have been gathered in by the Attractor, as it was."

"It does contain gold," broke in the chief. "That is, specimens of ore rock."

"Well, there's gold in that ore, that is positive; for practically what my Attractor was intended for was to demonstrate the existence of the metal in paying quantities in ore bodies. And now, chief, if you'll see to the returning of these valuables to their respective owners, I'll be getting along home. The only thing further I can say, is that I am very sorry that my son's inquisitiveness brought about all this commotion, and I sincerely hope that the victims of my Attractor will freely forgive me for the temporary fright that I know each one sustained."

"Say, Sam," said the chief, after telephoning Matthewson and the others to call at headquarters for their property, "that contrivance is the nearest approach to the devil that I hope I'll ever get, either in this world or the next!"

And, say! Maybe I didn't feel relieved myself, now that the "spook" was laid and my fright a thing of the past.

* * *

He Was Cheated.

Casey was on his way home from a fishing trip down by the bell buoy. He had a fine string of blackfish, so heavy that he thought he needed a counterweight to balance them. Not having a can with him, he had dropped in to put another weight in the middle, where he believed it would do almost as much good.

"And ivery wan of us," he said, winding up his story of the day's fishing, "wint away with fifteen foine blackfish on his string."

"How many fish did you catch in all?" some one asked.

"Sixty," said Casey; "there were four of us."

"Who were they?"

"Well, I was wan, and the two Kellys was two, and Finnegan was three, and—Finnegan, he was three, and—I'm sure there were four of us! But who the divil was the other fellow?"

Casey began again.

"Try it this way," he said: "Finnegan was wan, and the two Kellys was two, and I was three, and—and, I'm blest if I can think who was the other wan."

Then Casey laid down his string of fish and began counting off the members of the fishing party on the fingers of his disengaged hand.

"I was wan," he said, doubling up a finger as he went along, "and the two Kellys was two, and Finnegan was three——"

"But the two Kellys were three," some one broke in.

"Do you know the two Kellys?" asked Casey, warmly.

"No."

"Well, then how can you say the two Kellys was three? Go on, man; you're drunk."

Casey stood thinking it over for a minute, and then he picked up his string of fish.

"I'm dommed," he said, "if the rascals didn't do me out of—three into sixty twenty times—out of five fishes."

* * *

"Too Much Argyment."

A general conversation was in progress in the Gold Wedge saloon in Goldfield, Nev., during the boom days, when a discussion of the taciturnity of certain individuals was brought up. Incidents were cited where men had gone for days without speaking to each other, but the best of them all was a story told by Death Valley Scotty, the world-famed prospector of the Nevada deserts.

"Well," said Scotty, according to the New York Evening Sun, "the worst I ever did hear about was Jim Crowley an' Krefain—Billy, the boys used to call him. They was the oldest prospectors in this country till they died, an' their camps have been pitched above some of the best mines that the State has developed. One night I rode up on 'em just as they was settin' down to grub, an' was invited to eat. I knowed them two 'sour doughs' of old, an' I spent a mighty quiet day with them.

"Nothin' must do but for me to look over their prospect, an' I did. As we was ridin' back to camp at the end of the day old Jim saw a bunch of cows feedin' over on a hill 'bout half a mile off. 'That's a good-lookin' yaller cow,' said Jim.

"'Yep. She's got red spots on her,' says Billy.

"I never thought of it again,' Scotty continued, "till the next morning, when I started away from camp. There was old Jim's half of the camp belongin's packed on one of the burros they had. Billy looked at old Jim kind of surprised.

"'Pullin' out?' he asked

"'Yep,' says Jim.

"'Why?' asked Billy.

"'Too much argyment,' Jim explained."

* * *

A woman can do much to brighten her home—if hubby will pay the gas bills.

Laurestine's Reward

Or, MRS. VANE'S REVENGE

By AGNES DOROTHY OTTO

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Begun in No. 44, November 2. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

RHODA CARMEN was the last of an old family who had farmed the little homestead surrounded by rocks and bleak uplands in the little village of Carwin, Massachusetts. Her grandfather had inclosed the meadows and the cornfields from the open mountain, and the place had always been profitable. But Rhoda spent very little on the cultivation of the soil, for the place would pass away at her death. So for years she puttered along with one old man for outside work and a strong healthy girl in the house. Every one knew that the little profit derived from the farm was being carefully put aside for her niece.

Rhoda Carmen had refused to forgive her brother when he married against her wishes. She kept her word. But when he and his wife died within a month of each other and left a little girl, she was asked to adopt the child. Without waiting for her consent the child was packed off to her aunt's home.

Miss Carmen was a hard, thin-featured woman, with stern, relentless black eyes. Her face was weatherbeaten, and her hands hard and coarse from farm work. She did not at all like to have a child of the hateful marriage thrown upon her. She had other plans, and to adopt a child would quite upset them. But all that changed, and the child soon won her way to the hard heart of the loveless woman, until finally the one aim of her life was to make her niece independent, so that she might have no excuse to marry for a home when her aunt died.

Marriage to Rhoda Carmen meant the worst calamity that could happen to a woman. To protect her niece from such a misfortune was the settled aim of her life. But when the little, puny child grew into beautiful womanhood and begged to be allowed to teach school, her Aunt Rhoda's amazement and consternation were pitiful. She was a proud woman, proud of her reputation and name. She could not allow the girl, a Carmen, to earn her living away from the homestead. But what her niece lacked in firmness and will power she made up in sweet persuasiveness. And finally her aunt's consent had been given, ungraciously to be sure, but given, and the girl became a teacher in the village school.

Aunt Rhoda's troubles had only commenced. It was soon discovered that the girl was clever, and was wasting her talents in a small village. She was transferred to a larger school. It was in vain that the other woman fretted and fumed. Her niece had her own gentle way of gaining her point. At the end of a hard, busy term the girl wrote to her aunt asking her consent to a part of her vacation being spent at a seaside place, a few miles from the town where her school was situated. Her aunt grudgingly consented to two weeks. But when the two weeks became two months and her niece finally wrote that she was married, the old woman's indignation knew no bounds.

All that day and the next Rhoda Carmen roamed about the homestead and the scattered fields her grandfather had inclosed upon the mountainside like one distracted. Passers-by loitered about and whispered mysteriously. After sunset when the tallest peak of the loftiest mountain stood misty and dark against the sky, she appeared in the kitchen before her astonished servant.

"I will never forgive her, and she will never darken my door again!" she exclaimed, with passionate anger. "I will never forgive her for deceiving me all these weeks!"

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive them as sin against us," said the girl in hushed tones, repeating the words Aunt Rhoda had taught her when she first came to work for her, over five years before

Rhoda Carmen said no more, but with head bent, left the kitchen and went upstairs. The girl heard her heavy tread back and forth in the room above. A great change came over the old woman. Every one except her maid, Emma, thought she was mad, for all her nature seemed turned to stone. She was never seen in church or at the market; she refused herself to all visitors, and never spoke to any one if she could possibly avoid it. She went about her work as usual; but it was a sad sight to see the heavy eyes and bowed shoulders.

Emma often saw her lips move, though they uttered no sound. No wonder everybody thought she was out of her mind. One Sunday evening, about a year after her niece's marriage, Rhoda Carmen was tramping through the shady little valleys and dells among the hills, looking for a discontented sheep, which had deserted its fold for pastures new, when she was overtaken by her farmhand, Eben Wilkens, a hoary-headed veteran of the soil who had worked on the Carmen homestead, man and boy, for sixty years.

The old man's face looked white under his shaggy beard and heavy eyebrows, and his voice trembled as he said. "Better go home, Miss Rhoda. The stray lamb has returned, and is in need of the tender care of a good shepherd."

She turned her tired eyes full on old Eben, but not a word escaped her lips. The moon came out and the light fell upon her face, trouble-worn and gray, and drawn into a scowl of stern and severe wrath. The old man, gaining courage through his simple faith, looked fearlessly into the hard face of his employer.

"Miss Rhoda," he said, trustfully, "I have just come from the church and the text was, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' "

Still she gazed at him in speechless denunciation. Then she turned from old Eben and strode back to the house, her gaunt figure silhouetted in the moonlight. As she passed through the woodyard with measured tread, she saw a light in the room her niece had occupied for upward of twelve years. As she came nearer the house Emma came to the door, lamp in hand, a terrified expression on her homely face, and peered out into the night.

"Oh, Miss Carmen," she cried in affrighted tones, "do come quick! Your niece——" But the look on Miss Rhoda's face froze the words on her lips.

Aunt Rhoda took the lamp, and motioning the girl to return to the kitchen, slowly mounted the stairs, a fixed purpose in mind. The same roof should not cover herself and niece. For a second she stood with her hand on the door, her lips compressed, a frown on her pallid face, and the half-dead eyes kindled with an angry fire. Then she pushed the door open and entered.

She half expected to see her niece crouching in a corner, and then to have her rush out and beg forgiveness of her aunt on her bended knees. Instead, she lay stretched across the little bed, her vacant eyes staring up at the ceiling, her hot, fevered head tossing from side to side. Aunt Rhoda's features relaxed. She saw that the girl was in a high fever. She removed her outer garments, and being an excellent nurse, began at once to administer restoratives.

But the poor girl was too far gone to respond to simple remedies. She had roamed for days, praying for courage to return to her aunt; but not until she was delirious with fever could she summon strength to meet the hard, stern woman. Almost the first thing Miss Rhoda Carmen noticed about her niece was the absence of a wedding ring. The poor little wife, believing that she had no right to it, had left it with her husband.

"Merciful Father!" she breathed, half aloud; "betrayed and deserted!"

Then she remembered old Eben's words. "Blessed are the merciful." Her niece lay in a state of unconsciousness all through the night, and the old woman watching her, quaked with fear.

"And to think she might have died outside my door on this chilly night," she kept repeating to herself.

Toward morning she drew aside the window curtain. Everywhere was silence, except for the murmuring of a brook running down the mountainside. Occasionally the clanking of the chains by which the cattle were secured to their stalls reached her ears, or a far-off house dog barking, and the loud ticking of the big clock in the hall below. At six Emma aroused suddenly from a deep sleep, and saw her mistress leaning over her bed, looking to the bewildered girl a very statue of terror.

"Get up, Emma," said Aunt Rhoda, "and come with me!" Then she placed a small lamp on a chair, and bidding Emma come as soon as she could, hurried away. In a few minutes the girl followed to the little room that had been vacant over a year.

There was a white, drawn face resting on the pillow, and sparse, wasted hands lying on the coverlet. The eyes were fast closed and the lips shut tightly. The girl saw that a change for the worse had taken place, and for a moment she thought the sick woman was really dead. But when Miss Rhoda took the baby from her niece's bosom and placed it in Emma's hands it seemed that a flutter of life stirred on the fixed, deathlike face. Then the girl understood the old woman's action. Aunt Rhoda gave a sigh of relief. "That will do," she said, and returned the child to her niece's arms. The mother's lips moved as if she were trying to say something. Aunt Rhoda beckoned Emma from the room.

"Go at once and bring your mother to me. Don't tell Eben or a soul what you have seen," she cautioned.

Glad of a few minutes respite from the grim, determined woman, the girl sped with all haste, and presently returned with her mother. For a moment the two women confronted each other in silence. Emma's mother was a pleasant-looking, rosy-cheeked woman of forty-five. Good nature shone all over her person. The roundness of her figure showed that it would take a good deal to disturb her. But there was a hardness about her mouth and a covert look in the gray-green eyes that quite escaped the casual observer.

"I think I have been able to help you in the past sufficiently to warrant my asking a return, "Miss Rhoda began, in steely tones. "And I am about to put a severe test on your gratitude."

The woman's curiosity was thoroughly aroused, but she answered in genuine earnestness. "Indeed, Miss Carmen, there's nothing you can ask me that I am not willing to do for you, knowing that you will not demand anything I am not able to perform. You have done more for me than my own flesh and blood ever did, and I'll do anything you say, if I die for it."

Miss Rhoda whispered to Emma to bring the baby. The girl looked at the grave austere face. "Yes, marm," she responded, picking up a shawl that had fallen off her shoulders.

"And if Eben comes in tell him nothing. I don't want gossip started."

"Yes, marm," said Emma again, hurrying from the room.

In a moment she returned with the infant. Then Aunt Rhoda Carmen unfolded her plan. "Only we three know that this baby was born here last night," she said.

Then she told the woman she must move that very day to another State and take the baby with her. She would be well paid, and if anything happened to the child Aunt Rhoda was to be notified. Otherwise she never wished to hear from it again. The woman looked dazed and troubled, and Emma listened with gaping eyes and mouth.

"But," began the woman, hesitatingly.

"There are no 'buts,' " curtly interposed Miss Rhoda. "The last twenty hours must become a blank except that my niece returned and is very ill of brain fever. I am sure I can trust you," concluded the woman, looking them squarely in the eyes.

"Yes, Miss Carmen," was the meek response, and Aunt Rhoda knew that torture would never elicit the wilful betrayal of her secret after the promise was given.

With a resolute gleam in her eyes and a settled purpose in every line of her stony, unrelenting face, Aunt Rhoda began to wrap the infant in the soft, warm shawl she removed from her own shoulders. Without another word she placed it in the other woman's arms. Then she led the way to the front entrance, and with a quiet "Remember" closed the door on her bewildered visitor. Then she dismissed Emma to her duties in the kitchen and returned to her patient. All that day she watched and nursed the unconscious woman. Not a wink of sleep came to her relief. Sometimes the sick girl moaned and tossed from side to side. Then for a long time the woman watching would think she was dead.

Aunt Rhoda prayed for her niece's recovery as she never prayed before. But she dreaded the first question the girl would ask. And Aunt Rhoda was a devout Christian, a God-fearing woman. This was the first wilful sin she had ever committed. But her niece was a Carmen, and no blot or blemish had ever marred the name; and she would tell this one lie to save that honored name. Her niece should never know that a live child had been born.

But Rhoda Carmen was never called upon to utter the cruel falsehood. That evening, just before sunset, Aunt Rhoda sat with tightly clenched hands by the little window. She could see old Eben loitering around. He was accustomed to take his daily orders from Aunt Rhoda and seemed at a loss what to do. Emma was clattering the dishes and singing softly, as she prepared the evening meal in the kitchen below. She was almost dozing in her chair when the weak, quivering voice of her niece said, "Auntie!"

She sat motionless, with no power to move. A rush of troubled pity flooded Aunt Rhoda's heart. "God forgive me," she breathed, "if I have wronged her!" Trembling all over she crept to the little bedside.

"Is there anything I can do to ease you?" she asked, shivering.

"If you would forgive me before I die," answered the weak voice from the pillow.

Aunt Rhoda sank on her knees, and with roughened hands stroked the beautiful, glossy hair. Emma's voice reached her from the kitchen as she sang:

> "Peace on earth and mercy mild,
> "God and sinners reconciled."

Aunt Rhoda looked up, tears streaming down her cheeks. What she intended to say in forgiveness will never be known, for the gentle spirit had fled. Her niece was dead. Just then the doctor, whom Aunt Rhoda had sent for from the next village, arrived.

"Poor child, emaciated to the last degree!" he said, taking the wasted hand. "Perished from hunger and want."

"And grief," Aunt Rhoda sighed under her breath.

CHAPTER V.

In the weeks that followed his engagement to Millicent Phillips, Gerald Worthing found many ruts in the course of true love. He was very sincere in his love for his beautiful fiancee, and Millicent loved him even as he loved her. But she caused Gerald pain and bitterness of heart by her wilful defiance of his wishes. Mrs. Vane and her friend, Mr. Stanley Markham, were a constant bone of contention between the lovers. Millicent had refused to announce their engagement until her father returned.

Mrs. Vane had been able to ferret it out, however, and while she was too shrewd to disclose her knowledge, she talked freely of an engagement which she hoped to bring about between Millicent and Stanley Markham. Later, when Millicent's engagement to Gerald would be announced and Mrs. Vane held up poor Markham's blighted heart as an object for sympathy, Millicent would be looked upon as a heartless jilt. And perhaps in the meantime, Gerald would become so jealous that the couple would quarrel and separate.

Mrs. Vane really hated Millicent for a successful rival. Gerald understood it all, but how could he tell this young girl that the powdered and rouged middle-aged widow had actually dreamed of marrying him, had sent him notes and uttered words which could only bear one construction? He had never breathed it to a soul, but he had made his feelings very plain to Mrs. Vane. She had hated him ever since. As for Stanley Markham, it maddened Gerald to think of that curled Adonis fawning at the feet of his betrothed.

Gerald had refused to take any part or even attend Mrs. Vane's masquerade, and now that Millicent was engaged to him he felt sure she would respect his wishes and stay away. Nothing, however, had been said on the subject since his war of words with Mrs. Vane, when he had refused to co-operate in connection with the mask ball, until two days before the much talked of event. When Gerald called on Millicent's aunt in her apartments they chatted pleasantly, and Miss Phillips told him that her brother would be back in a few days. This was good news to Gerald. He wanted to announce his engagement. Millicent in her wilfulness was seeing too much of her undesirable friends.

Presently Miss Phillips took pity on the young man's impatience to see his betrothed and smilingly went in search of the young girl. As the woman moved away, Gerald saw lying on a sofa behind the chair in which Miss Phillips had been seated a fencing foil, a gauntlet and a mask, and near them, if he could trust his eyes, was a short black satin dress. He had heard Mrs. Vane whispering loudly about the dress she wanted Millicent to wear. As he thought of the girl's queenly height and the short skirt, the happy light died out of his eyes, and his face paled.

There was a clutch as of icy fingers at his heart. He knew that the fencing costume was for Mrs. Vane's ball. A domino to match was beside it. He drew away from the things and stood in the large bay of the window where Millicent would see him as soon as she crossed the hall. He heard her light footstep behind him, her sweet tones in his ear, her lips upon his cheek as she tiptoed to kiss him. Then she started back frightened by the pallor of his face.

"Gerald, Gerald!" she whispered. "What is it, dear?"

He drew her over to the sofa, and pointing to the costume asked huskily: "Millicent, what do these things mean?"

The girl was silent for a moment, then she looked at him half-defiantly.

"What a strange question, Gerald," she said, indifferently. "This is the costume I am to wear at Mrs. Vane's ball."

"Then you did not go with Mrs. Vane to select them?" he asked, almost hopefully. "Oh, my darling——"

"Of course I went, Gerald. Auntie took me." Millicent laughed carelessly, though every word she spoke was a stab in her own heart; and she saw that every word was like a blow to Gerald.

"Did you forget my request?" he questioned, hopelessly.

"No; I did not forget."

She was surprised at the steadiness of her own tones, but she was trembling violently. Up to this point she had no intention of going to the ball, but it would never do to give in at once to this loving tyrant. Mrs. Vane had known Gerald for years, and she had told her to beware of his tyrannical temper.

"Millicent," he said, and there was no

anger in his voice; "I am pained beyond expression. It seems as if my wishes have no weight with you. Your whims must have priority always."

"My whims," she said. "That is a harsh speech, Gerald. What do you think of my dress? It is Mrs. Vane's choice, and I am delighted with it."

He looked at her despairingly. "Millicent," he asked, "are you trying to make me insane?"

"How absurdly you talk!" she laughed. "What have I said to drive you insane? It is you who seem to take a delight in teasing me and spoiling my pleasure. But I warn you I have a will of my own."

"Millicent," he went on, earnestly, "I am afraid you do not love me, you care so little whether you please me or not."

"Gerald, what do you mean? You know that I love you, and the real trouble is, I will not allow you to be a grand inquisitor so soon. It will be time enough for me to relinquish my individuality after we are married."

She tried to speak lightly and infuse a little raillery into her tones. But his quiet manner did not change, and she shivered at his cold, set face.

"I am willing to overlook all that is past and done, but you must choose between me and Mrs. Vane's ball. Stanley Markham is her guest, and let me say that I refuse to allow my future wife to be whirling around in that man's arms, to say nothing of the immodesty of the dress."

"This is going too far," she thought. Aloud she said: "Your terms are impossible, Gerald Worthing; and I will not be made subject to your tyranny. I shall go to Mrs. Vane's ball, and I shall wear the 'immodest costume' of a fencing girl."

She flashed defiance from her eyes.

"And dance with Stanley Markham?" he added.

"Perhaps. If he asks me I shall not refuse."

There was hopeless despair in his brooding eyes as he said: "Very well, Millicent, if you go to Mrs. Vane's masquerade, I give you your freedom."

"I have not surrendered it," she interrupted angrily.

"I think you will be sorry for this. If you have ever loved me you will be sorry. I hope for the best. It is in your power to make one life, at least, happy or miserable." He had risen and was looking at her with yearning eyes. He put out his hands mutely, but she did not see. "Good-by," he said. "The future is in your own hands, for good or ill."

The next moment he was gone.

"How angry he is and how he loves me!" she laughed triumphantly. "He will come back when he finds I do not go to the ball."

When Gerald left the hotel he unconsciously took the walk past the fallen tree where it had become a habit for him to look for Laurestine. But he was not thinking of her now. He walked moodily along with head bowed. He was too dazed to think. He could only murmur:

"She shall choose between us. If she prefers Mrs. Vane to me, then I will see her no more. I will go away at once, and oh, Lord, I think it will be the death of me! I never knew how much I cared for her, and now perhaps it is too late. I may be exacting, but if she cares for me she will humor what she calls my prejudices." At this point of his reveries Gerald was startled by a familiar voice.

"Peek-a-boo!"

"Oh, what was that?" cried Gerald, looking in every direction but the one from which he knew the voice came. "Why, it is Laurestine."

An animated pair of blue eyes peeped at him from under the rim of a green umbrella rusty with age, which had protected the Wilkes family from sunshine and storm for a quarter of a century.

"Yes, it is Laurestine," replied the child, shyly. "And she is wondering what you are dreaming about that you almost passed without seeing her."

Gerald had not been thinking of Laurestine, but now he was glad that he had carelessly taken that path, for if there was anybody who could make him forget his heartache it was this lovely innocent child.

"If you will permit me I will take a seat under your umbrella, where there will be less fear of sunstroke," he said, smiling.

She made room for him on the fallen tree, and went on sorting the sweet grass preparatory to making it into baskets. The umbrella had been skilfully tied to the tree, and afforded for the time a perfect shade.

Gerald was abstracted, but the girl, who had overcome much of her timidity, chatted about her work and Granny. Gerald had not given up the idea that there was some mystery about Laurestine. So far he had not carried out his intention of asking Millicent to help him, for she was so uncertain in her moods he was not sure but she would misunderstand his friendly interest in the little girl. He had learned from Laurestine that the old couple were not her real grandparents. But all the girl could find out was that her mother was nothing to be proud of, and that she had never had a father. She had an aunt however, who had given her the name of Laurestine. She was very kind and came only occasionally to see her. She lived a long way off and Laurestine had not seen her since she was eight years old. Then she had given her a bracelet with her name and the meaning of the word Laurestine engraved on it.

Gerald, in moody silence, watched Laurestine as she deftly arranged the sweet grass. The girl, apparently not noticing his absorption, chatted in her usual quiet way.

"How busy you are," he said at last. "How long do you intend staying here, may I ask? Because it is really too hot to bask in this sun."

"So you want to be rid of me?" she said, poutingly.

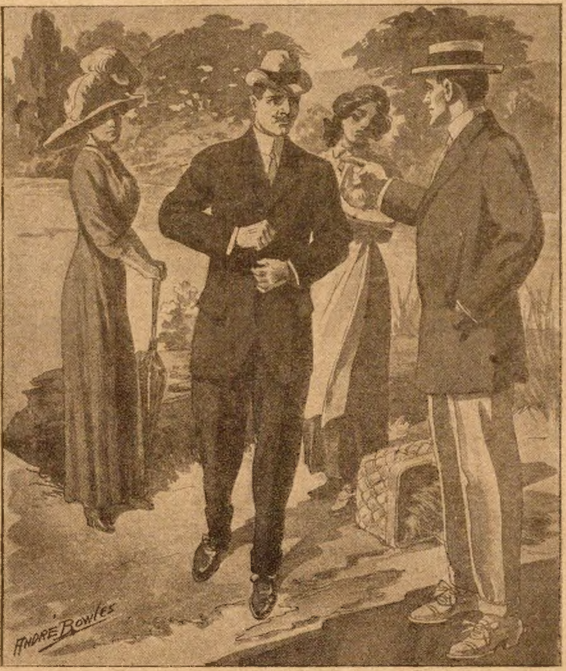
"Not for worlds, but I was wishing that this tree had fallen in the other direction. Then we should have shade from the trees at this hour; but as it is, we have only the umbrella."

She cast upward a swift, happy glance, and he did not see that her whole soul shone in her eyes as she said, "I will not stay many minutes longer," and then the dexterous fingers worked faster than ever.

"Then I think I will stay with you, Laurestine, if I may."

"How kind of you, and I have so many things to tell you. I do want to know why you are so sad today."

But whatever was on Laurestine's mind was not said just then, for as she uttered the last word two figures emerged from the other end of the lane. Gerald recognized Mrs. Vane and her friend Stanley Markham. He saw the absurdity of himself seated under an old rusty umbrella with the pretty little basket maker, and he knew that his approaching enemies would use it to advantage. But he could not run away, and Laurestine, seeing no reason for embarrassment, looked calmly at the arrivals.



"Stanley Markham, you are a scoundrel!"

"Ah, what have we here—the babes in the woods, I declare," exclaimed Mrs. Vane, playfully. But the malicious spite in her eyes did not escape Gerald.

"I see you are at your old sport," she added, "sipping sweets from every flower."

Worthing felt angry with Mrs. Vane, for there was a hidden sting in all that she said. But while he felt keenly his foolish position, he was too much master of himself to show his discomfort, and he did not forget that his adversary was a woman.

"Won't you take this seat, Mrs. Vane?" he said rising. "We were just regretting that this tree didn't fall in the opposite direction. As it is, we were about to move on. Of course, you are acquainted with this little girl, Miss Wilkes."

Gerald had only acknowledged Mrs. Vane's companion by a slight nod. But when he mentioned Laurestine's name, Stanley Markham, looking boldly in the girl's face, replied: "Everybody knows Laurestine, the pretty peddler. And to be frank with you, Worthing, I think it mighty selfish of you to monopolize all the pretty girls."

Laurestine had risen when Gerald mentioned her name, and now stood looking shyly from one to the other.

"Little girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Vane. "Why, she is as tall as Millicent Phillips, and almost as pretty."

Markham reached over to Laurestine's basket and began to handle the contents. In doing so his hand came in contact with hers, and Gerald saw the man deliberately squeeze her fingers. Laurestine gave a little gasp and dropped the basket, all her afternoon's work undone, for the carefully sorted grass lay in wild confusion at her feet. Laurestine was not ~~old~~ enough to conceal her tears, and two big drops glistened on her lashes.

All this while a storm had been brewing in Worthing's breast. But how could he resent this insult to Laurestine in the presence of Mrs. Vane and the innocent child? Meanwhile Mrs. Vane watched the storm brewing and was not at all adverse to doing her share to accelerate matters.

"The artful little minx is posing for Mr. Worthing's benefit," she said, wickedly.

"Yes," replied Markham, looking at Laurestine with an insulting sneer. "You are kinder when I meet you alone, are you not, pretty one?"

There was the bone and strength of a gladiator in Gerald's solid frame. Markham was the same size, but if they ever came to blows he would be but a toy in the hands of his opponent.

"Stanley Markham," hissed Gerald, under his breath, "you are a scoundrel!"

For a second Markham quailed before the righteous anger of Worthing, but knowing that a fight was impossible, the coward took a high-hand attitude; his face and lips had grown white and he clenched his hands savagely.

"You confounded meddler!" he said, hotly, "by what right do you bully me, or set yourself up to be the champion of maidens in distress?"

Laurestine had watched the conflict of words in mute despair. But at Markham's last words she drew near Worthing and laid her hands timidly but protectingly on his arm; and at the same time she flashed upon Markham a glance of anger and scorn.

"Upon my word," giggled Mrs. Vane, "Mr. Gerald Worthing we are indebted to you for quite a touching bit of melodrama. Come, Stanley, let us go before the curtain descends and destroys the illusion."

Markham already hated Worthing for winning Millicent Phillips. Mrs. Vane had encouraged him to think he had only to ask Millicent to complete the conquest he had begun in the city, and now he had only just learned of the actual engagement from Mrs. Vane. He was determined to get even with Worthing. He would make the most of this adventure when retailing it to Millicent. Mrs. Vane would back his statements.

"You execrable busybody, you shall hear from me again!" he said half suffocated with rage.

"Spare me that infliction," sneered Worthing.

Mrs. Vane took Markham's arm with a gleeful chuckle, and courtesied adieu to Gerald, who without further notice of the couple, was bending down and carefully rearranging the contents of Laurestine's basket. The girl helped him, a troubled look in her eyes.

"What wicked people they are, Gerald," she said, indignantly.

For a moment Gerald made no answer; his feelings were the reverse of comfortable. Wicked people they surely were. He was thinking of the mischief their malice might cause to the inoffensive Laurestine, as well as to himself and Millicent.

"I don't think he will trouble you any more, Laurestine," he said, at last, trying to believe his words. He wanted to tell her everything about Millicent. It was on his tongue, but he thought she would not understand. So he took one of her plump little hands in his own in a brotherly fashion, whispering, "Laurestine, I can never forgive myself for the wrong I have committed."

She raised her sweet face to his, tears in her eyes.

"Gerald, you are too good to do any wrong. Tell me what is troubling you; let me help you. Ah, do not laugh at me! A mouse helped a lion once. Besides, am I not your friend?"

Then he told her he would return to the city soon, and before going he would tell her many things that he wished her to know. Meanwhile she must be a patient little girl. Then he dried her tears and patted her as he would a baby; put her basket in her hand and told her to trot along home. He watched her until she was out of sight.

"Poor child!" he murmured. "Millicent will believe me, but who would believe that simple girl against the spiteful tongue of Mrs. Vane? Was ever a man in such dilemma?"

CHAPTER VI.

Smarting under defeat and Gerald Worthing's sneer, Stanley Markham and Mrs. Vane went directly to the hotel where Millicent Phillips was stopping. Millicent's aunt was sitting on the veranda near the door. The couple bowed and passed on, showing that their visit was to Millicent. Miss Phillips followed the precious pair with her eyes, and secretly longed for ther brother's return, when the arduous task of chaperoning her niece would become easier.

In a few moments she was relieved to see Mrs. Vane and her companion leave the hotel. Millicent had refused to see them, complaining of a headache. But she had sent word that she would call on Mrs. Vane the next day. Obliged to be satisfied with this, Millicent's friends had to nurse their grievances another day.

After sitting on the fallen tree a long time, wondering confusedly how Millicent would receive Mrs. Vane's account of Laurestine, Gerald walked slowly back to the village. As he emerged from the quiet, shady passageway of the hedges into the bustling main street, he observed hurrying toward him a man loaded down with a suitcase and hunting outfit.

"Ah, Worthing, delighted to see you," exclaimed the man, as he came nearer.

"Why, Mr. Phillips, you are the very man I was wishing to see," declared Worthing, heartily, reaching for the other's hand.

They stood for a few minutes and chatted, looking up and down for a vehicle. But as there was none in sight, they walked on together to the hotel, which was only a few blocks away.

After the first greetings Phillips explained that he had not been feeling well, so he decided to return a few days before the rest of the party. On their arrival at the hotel they learned that Miss Phillips was out and that Millicent was lying down with a headache, but she would come to her father in a few minutes.

So the two men talked, and finally Worthing in a few straightforward words asked Phillips for his consent to marry his daughter. Phillips could not conceal the pleasure Gerald's words gave him. But he looked quite serious when he said:

"My boy, do you think you can make each other happy? If so, you have my consent and best wishes."

For a moment Worthing had forgotten his parting with Millicent; and he had no hesitation in saying: "We love each other, and you have made me the happiest of men. If you will excuse me, I will go in search of her and tell her the good news. But I will not forget that you have not seen her yet, and will bring her to you very soon."

Phillips was fond of the young man and he patted him affectionately on the shoulder. "God bless you, my boy," he said, warmly.

Millicent was surprised to see her lover again so soon. She thought at least it would take a day for him to forgive her angry disregard for his wishes. But she was relieved to find that he had forgiven her. She was seated in her aunt's room expecting to see her father, when Gerald entered. She rose and stood before him, a happy smile and a half ashamed expression on her face.

"Millicent, my darling."

"Gerald, dear, can you forgive me?"

"What, forgive you, dearest? It is I who should ask forgiveness." He folded her in his arms, and the little cloud that had risen between them faded away.

For a few moments they talked tenderly to each other, and Millicent was very sweet. Gerald was supremely happy, but he remembered his promise to take her to her father.

"Now that we have your father's consent," he whispered, as they wended their way through the hall, "there is no further occasion for secrecy. We can tell everybody."

He gazed proudly at the lovely girl, and she looked up in his face, inestimably happy.

That evening Gerald dined at the Phillips' table. After a few casual questions about the gossip of the hotel, Merton Phillips launched out in a description of his hunting trip, which consumed nearly all the dinner time. Gerald was greatly relieved when no mention was made of the masked ball that was to take place the following night.

Merton Phillips had done business with Mrs. Vane's husband in the past, and knew to his sorrow that the deceased man's methods were anything but honest. Gerald knew all this, and also that when Phillips learned that Mrs. Vane had taken a cottage at Pawling he would not sanction his daughter's acceptance of hospitality from the widow, who was spending the ill-gotten gains. It was all past now, but Gerald was glad to avoid any reference to a painful subject.

That evening was a happy one for the lovers. Gerald was a great lover of music, and Millicent sang some of his favorite songs. She seemed to forget that she had an audience and sang one love song after another with warm pathos and deep passion. When Gerald parted with his fiancee that night he was not only an engaged man, but their wedding was fixed for some time in November.

"I never heard you sing so well as you did tonight, Millicent," observed Merton Phillips, with a twinkle in his eye and a touch of banter in his tone.

The father and daughter were left alone. Miss Phillips was dozing in the adjoining room. "I didn't get half through talking to Worthing," he continued. "You monopolized him, so he even forgot to say good night to me."

Millicent looked at him wistfully for a moment, then blushed furiously. She went over to her father's side, and put her soft arms around his neck.

"Gerald will see you early tomorrow. He told me to say so. You know that he has asked me to be his wife."

"Yes; he told me he had loved you a long time, and asked my consent to an engagement."

He looked anxiously at his daughter, wondering fearfully whether this wilful, headstrong girl was capable of love that would help her yield to the wishes of her husband.

"Aren't you glad, papa?" she whispered shyly. "How strangely you look at me."

"No, no, dear, I am not strange. I am naturally anxious for your happiness. I know and love Gerald. I would rather see you married to him than to any one else I know. In fact, I am relieved at your wise decision. To tell the truth, I was a little concerned about that handsome, smooth-tongued Markham that hung around last winter. These men with the heads of Apollo set on Hercules' shoulders keep the fathers of handsome daughters anxious all the time."

"Is that a compliment or not, papa?" laughed Millicent.

"Well, you are pretty headstrong, my dear, and proud even to obstinacy. I have trembled to think what would happen if you should marry some shallow-headed fellow; but you have now made me very happy."

He put his arm tenderly about her.

"I love Gerald very dearly, papa, so much so that I am ashamed to show it. But I will be candid with you, because you are my father and can advise me. My lover is a devoted tyrant. I see it in every action. He thinks that a wife has no [illegible]t she should always submit to the wishes of her husband."

"She should, Millicent, to a certain extent," said her father, kindly.

"Oh, I might have expected that answer, papa! You are a man, and will of course take sides with Gerald."

"But you don't mean to say you have quarreled already?" asked the astonished father.

"Not very much, but I had to tell him I couldn't consent to be utterly effaced, and that I have a mind of my own, which I would occasionally like to use. Don't look so horrified, papa. He was awfully angry at first, but now we understand each other thoroughly. There will be no more trouble, and the subject may never be referred to again."

Merton Phillips kissed his daughter good night. The anxious perplexity on his face was not on his daughter's account. He was thinking of Gerald.

CHAPTER VII.

The following day Millicent made her promised call on Mrs. Vane. It would have been useless to ask Gerald to accompany her. So she prevailed upon her aunt. Miss Phillips and Mrs. Vane had very little in common, but the older woman felt that her presence was a restraint on Stanley Markham, whom she felt sure would be there. Mr. Phillips had learned of the proximity of the dashing widow and grunted his disapproval. But, as his daughter said, she could not break off an acquaintance all at once; so he had to be content.

Mrs. Vane was desperately busy. Her ball was to be the biggest event of the season. She frowned when she saw Miss Phillips. Her plan was to tell her adventure of the day before to Millicent's ears only. But it was too good to keep. She meant to enjoy the proud girl's chagrin when Millicent learned that she had a rival—and the peddler girl at that.

She greeted them with great effusion, kissed Millicent, and chatted in her usual rapid style. "Oh, you darling!" she gushed, "I was afraid you would not be able to come until tonight, when we shall not have a chance to talk."

"I am not sure that I can come tonight. Indeed, that is why I am here now, to tell you, Mrs. Vane," said Millicent.

"Oh, I will not hear of such a thing. This is the work of that wicked autocrat of yours. By giving way to him you are laying out for yourself a life of misery." She showed her row of false teeth and held up her hands in mock terror at the prospect.

"I am afraid I cannot come, Mrs. Vane. But please do not bring in Mr. Worthing's name, for I assure you his wishes will not be consulted in the matter." Millicent held her head proudly.

Her aunt looked pained, for she saw a vindictive gleam had shot from Mrs. Vane's eyes.

"My dear," said Mrs. Vane, "your words have taken a heavy load from my mind, for from what I witnessed yesterday I am glad to hear that you are not a slave to that paragon of virtue and propriety, Mr. Gerald Worthing."

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Phillips and Millicent in the same breath.

Gerald had thought his predicament the day before was ridiculous, but if he had heard the garbled version Mrs. Vane gave of the incident he would have been dumfounded. Millicent was furiously angry, but she had detected the spite in Mrs. Vane's manner, and her pride came to her assistance. She would not show her heart to this cruel woman. That Gerald was guilty of deception she never doubted. But he had been right when he said that Mrs. Vane was a scheming woman. She listened to the wretched story with an aching heart and a weary brain.

"Oh, my dear, it was so funny!" Mrs. Vane laughed merrily, gleams of malice shooting from the corners of her eyes. "There they sat cuddled up under an old umbrella, cooing like turtle doves, but the screamingly funny thing was that Mr. Gerald got angry when we caught him. Of course, it must have been very embarrassing, for the girl is very common. Stanley Markham knows her well, as do all the other men in the village. But Gerald Worthing seems to have a monopoly."

"If you mean the little basket seller," said Auntie Phillips, "she impresses me as being the reverse of common."

"Oh, she is a finished actress," laughed Mrs. Vane.

"I suppose as a jealous woman I ought to feel as much concerned as you do, Mrs. Vane; but for the life of me I can't consider that ignorant girl as a rival."

Mrs. Vane winced under this stray shot, and adroitly changed the subject. Millicent was glad when her aunt made a move to go. "You are very busy, Mrs. Vane, and we will not detain you any more," she said, as coolly as if her head and heart were not in a fever of angry jealousy. "Come, auntie."

At last it was over, and she was walking down the little path that led to a side gate in Mrs. Vane's grounds and she heard the widow calling after her. "Good-by, dear. Be sure to come tonight. Miss Phillips, I am depending on you to bring her. That hot-tempered and headstrong young man will never do it."

Millicent and her aunt walked some distance in silence. Presently the girl turned to her aunt. "What do you think of my immaculate lover, auntie?" she asked, suddenly.

"I hardly know," stammered the older woman, uncomfortably. "It is very disagreeable, but I am sure that woman has exaggerated the story, and Gerald will be able to explain it."

"Auntie," said Millicent, sternly, "do you think that he will ever be called upon to explain? I will never mention it to him; but in the future I shall please myself. I was willing to give up Mrs. Vane and the ball, in other words to allow him to choose my friends; in return he makes me a laughing stock. Blind fool that I was to think he was different from the rest. Auntie," she added, stamping her little foot with rage, "I am going to the ball tonight, and you must take me."

She was a picture of fury.

"But your father, my child?" said her aunt, nervously.

"Papa knows nothing about this. He thinks Gerald Worthing is a model. Besides, Mrs. Vane says all men take sides with one another."

Miss Phillips braved the angry eyes of her niece when she replied. "You have listened too much to the venomous tongue of that woman, Millicent. She has spread gossip about every one. She is not a suitable friend for a young girl."

The girl replied with a gesture of passionate scorn. They walked a few paces in silence. "Auntie," she cried suddenly, "you must certainly take me to that masquerade tonight. Papa will not oppose it much, if you consent cheerfully. If you don't, I shall go alone, and I'll never forgive you, auntie," she threatened.

Auntie Phillips knew from sad experience that it would be useless for her to withhold her consent. Millicent would have her way eventually. So with many misgivings for the outcome the kind-hearted but weak woman promised against her better judgment.

Millicent avoided Gerald the rest of the day, and at night, after a severe lecture from her father, she went to the mask ball, accompanied by her aunt.

Merton Phillips strolled out before going to bed. It was a sultry night. At the far end of the veranda he saw Gerald Worthing looking disconsolately out at the deep shadows folding the night in obscurity. A distant clock struck eleven. The sonorous notes, ringing out across the hillside, suggested the lateness of the hour.

"Why, Gerald," exclaimed Phillips, "not at the ball? Are you ill?"

Gerald had been roaming around forlornly, hoping against hope that Millicent's headache would get better and she would join him. "Ball?" he asked, in startled tones. "What ball?"

Phillips looked at him gravely. Suddenly it flashed upon him. The mask ball was the thing the lovers had quarreled over.

"I thought you had gone to Mrs. Vane's ball with Millicent and her aunt," he said, uneasily.

Gerald stared at him a long time in utter consternation. The color staining his cheeks failed to tell the misery his friend's words had caused. For a moment he leaned against the wall of the house for support; then he started to pace back and forth, and Merton Phillips was startled by the unnatural tones in which the young man answered him.

"I wonder if you understand, Mr. Phillips, the misery your daughter's pride and capriciousness has brought upon me? Oh, Millicent," he added, with a moan, "how could you do it?"

Phillips was quite at a loss what to say. He looked sorrowfully at his young friend. "Cheer up, my boy," he said, at last. "Don't take it so badly. This ball, it seems, was an old standing promise, and Millicent couldn't very well get out of going. Don't let her see that you care so much. Women are a good deal like your shadows. You follow her, and she runs away from you; you run away from her and she follows you. Just show a little indifference tomorrow, and she will be very sorry for opposing your wishes."

But Gerald had already made up his mind that for him and Millicent there would be no tomorrow. He had said she should choose between him and Mrs. Vane, and she had chosen; and now if it broke his heart he would never see her again.

If Gerald Worthing had known that Millicent never intended going to the mask ball after he had declared his disapproval, that her dress was packed ready to be returned, and that her visit to Mrs. Vane's in the morning was intended to prepare her for Millicent's final refusal to be present at night; if he had known the story Mrs. Vane poured into the poor girl's ears, he would still have felt that her action was unpardonable. For, at least, she should have given him an opportunity to explain.

It did not occur to Gerald that a few words from him the night before would have prepared Millicent for Mrs. Vane's vindictiveness. If Millicent could have said, "Oh, yes; Gerald told me all about it. Wasn't it funny?" It would have taken the wind out of the other woman's sails, so to speak, to say nothing of the advantage the person has who gives his version first. So Millicent did what scores of other women with milder temperaments than hers would have done. And Gerald never doubted that his betrothed had deliberately disregarded his wishes, and was at that moment being whirled around in the arms of the detested Stanley Markham, with the spiteful Mrs. Vane looking on triumphantly.

Mr. Phillips was looking earnestly at his young friend. "Come Gerald," he said, "don't take it too seriously. I don't approve of masquerades, and Mrs. Vane any more than you do. I lectured my daughter strictly before she started. I have her promise that she will break off all acquaintance with the widow after tonight."

But Mr. Phillips did not know the extent of the lovers' quarrel or the threat that Gerald had made.

"There are several things I would like to explain, Mr. Phillips," he replied, "but I'm not up to it. As I shall be leaving early in the morning I will say good night—and good-by."

Still Mr. Phillips had no suspicion of the seriousness of this sudden departure. He thought the surprise would be good for Millicent. So he put out his hand and said heartily:

"Good idea, my boy. Good-by. And I repeat: Don't worry and don't be too hasty. Many hearts have been broken and homes blighted through a hasty decision. Good night, good night."

Gerald was too full of his own trouble to notice the tightening lips and the bitterness in the tones of the older man.

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

A Family Deadlock.

"She seems so little to send to school," said Mrs. Richmond, looking yearningly at her diminutive daughter, who was seated in a corner of the livingroom, disciplining with great earnestness and sternness her large family of dolls of assorted ages and greatly varying sizes.

"I wouldn't send her then," said Richmond, easily. "What difference does it make whether she goes this year or not?"

"Well, I don't want her to be behind the children of her own age," said Mrs. Richmond hesitatingly. "But she's a tiny thing! I feel as if it would be deliberately giving my baby over to the hand of the destroyer."

"You might teach her at home," ventured Richmond.

His wife's face brightened. "So I might," she returned, "and I do believe I will." Then she looked dubious for a moment. "But I don't know what to teach her."

"Teach her her letters," said Richmond. "That was good enough for you and me, and I've heard lots of people complain that their children didn't know the alphabet"

"I believe I'll try, anyway," said Mrs. Richmond.

Accordingly, the next morning she cornered her ewe lamb in the nursery.

"Now, Frances, darling," she said, with the carefully assumed veneer of buoyancy in which she had seen kindergartners and other guardians of the infant intelligence enwrap themselves as with a garment, "you and I are going to have a dear little school right here in the nursery."

"I would rather," remarked the prospective pupil reflectively, "have a big apple and a piece of candy."

"Well, maybe we'll have those, too," agreed the embryotic instructress, "but not until after we've had our lesson."

"What's a lesson?" inquired the pupil, warily.

"It's—let's see. It's to teach you your letters, so you can read lovely stories out of books."

Frances pondered this for a moment. "But I'd rather have you read them to me," she said, after proper reflection.

"But you can't always have me to do that, dear," said Mrs. Richmond firmly. She drew Frances into her lap and opened the book with which she had decided to begin the fray. "All the little girls learn to read, and mother would be terribly ashamed if her little girl didn't. Now, look at this funny letter with the two legs and the piece across the middle like a queer little ladder. What do you think that letter is?"

"I never saw it before," said Frances, "so I guess I don't care about its name."

"Well, that letter is named A," said Mrs. Richmond, ignoring her daughter's more or less disheartening attitude toward that eminently respectable member of the alphabet. "Now, here's one with two funny little fat balloons stuck on a stick. The name of that one is B."

"Is it?" Frances inquired, with perfunctory politeness. "I guess I don't like to read very well," she explained courteously, as she made a tentative effort to get down from her mother's lap.

"But you'll have to learn, dearie," said Mrs. Richmond, patiently. "Now, tell mother what this letter with the two legs is."

Frances put a fat forefinger on the letter.

"We'll call that B," she said sweetly. "Now, can I go, muvver?"

"No, lambkin," said her mother firmly. "That's A. See how funny it looks with the two slanting legs and the little piece between them. Now, what's its name?"

Frances heaved a deep sigh "I guess we'll call it B," she said, with gentle firmness.

"But it's A, precious," insisted her mother.

"Is it?" inquired Frances. "I think I'll call it B."

"Now, Frances," said her mother, sternly, "you know that letter is A, and you must say it."

There was no reply. Frances was attentively observing a sparrow shaking itself on the window ledge.

"Frances," her mother said, "tell mother what that letter is."

"Oh, mother," Frances cried joyously, "did you see that sparrow picking his tooth with his feathers?"

Mrs. Richmond set her small daughter down on the floor. "Now, Frances," she said, "tell me the name of that letter or I'll put you to bed."

Frances looked up at the ceiling and crossed her fat hands on her little stomach. "We'll call it B," she said finally.

Half an hour later Mrs. Richmond went into Frances' little room. A sweetly smiling face looked up at her from the bed. Mrs. Richmond sat down beside the culprit and took the little hand in hers. There was no recognized principle of pedagogy in the method which she adopted.

"Baby," she pleaded, "please do as mother wants you to. Mother hates to punish her baby. Tell me the right name of this letter."

She drew out the book and laid her finger on the much discussed letter. There was a breathless pause.

"Well, muvver," said a bored voice, deliberately, "maybe it's an A for you, but I guess I'll call it B."

"I think I'll have to send Frances to school after all," admitted Mrs. Richmond to Frances' father that evening after dinner. "I'm afraid my method of imparting instruction is not sufficiently modern."

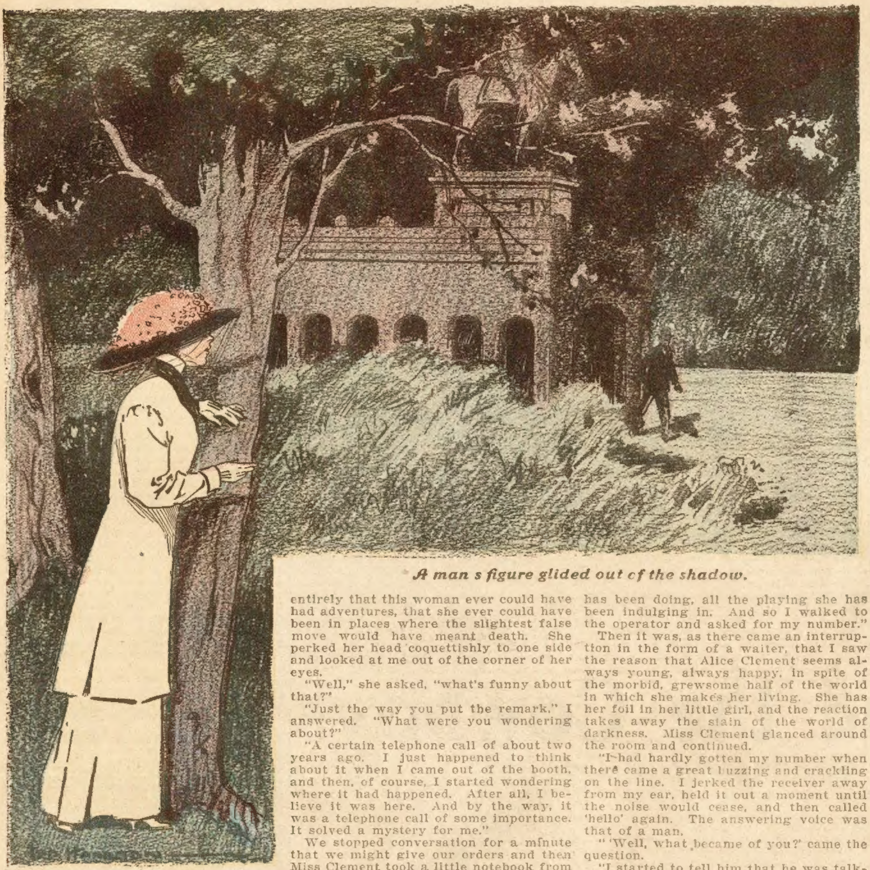
* * *

The chronic bore makes a big hole in the busy man's day.

Alice Clement, Detective

THE CROSSED CLEW

By COURTNEY R. COOPER



A man s figure glided out of the shadow.

(Copyright, 1912, by W. G. Chapman.)

(Editor's Note—On the payroll of the municipal detective department of the City of Chicago appears the name of Alice Clement, sleuth. To the trackers of men who make their headquarters at the bureau at 179 North La Salle street, she is known as "Alice of the Smile." Fearless, resourceful, dangerous in a hundred simple little disguises which mask her, yet do not hinder her, she has found the evidence which has sent many a man and many a woman to the penitentiary. There is hardly a dangerous dive of the great city which she, in her twelve years of detective life, has not visited. More than once has her life been in danger, many times has she been compelled to use the dirk or the revolver that she carries for protection. And yet, through it all, she has remained pretty, vivacious, full of life and the love of living—and always deserving of her name, "Alice of the Smile." Too, she has always remained reticent, non-communicative about her adventures, until Mr. Cooper persuaded her to tell her adventures for the first time.)

I'LL telephone home and then I'll be right with you," said Miss Clement, detective on the municipal force of Chicago, as she gave her number to the girl at the hotel telephone booth. A moment or so of waiting and then we started for the diningroom. And as we seated ourselves, Miss Clement seemed busy with thought.

"I've just been wondering," said she, "whether it was here or somewhere else."

I laughed at her vague remark; Miss Clement has always been a sort of a study to me. There is a kittenish childishness, a twinkle and sparkle of the eyes, a series of mannerisms which give her many times the appearance more of a child than of a woman who has tracked thieves and other evildoers for years. She has a way of presenting things in the most girlish of ways; there is sometimes a little air of irresponsibility that is fetching to the degree that you forget entirely that this woman ever could have had adventures, that she ever could have been in places where the slightest false move would have meant death. She perked her head coquettishly to one side and looked at me out of the corner of her eyes.

"Well," she asked, "what's funny about that?"

"Just the way you put the remark," I answered. "What were you wondering about?"

"A certain telephone call of about two years ago. I just happened to think about it when I came out of the booth, and then, of course, I started wondering where it had happened. After all, I believe it was here. And by the way, it was a telephone call of some importance. It solved a mystery for me."

We stopped conversation for a minute that we might give our orders and then Miss Clement took a little notebook from her handbag.

"It's marked down here as the 'Case of the Crossed Wires,'" she said, "and that's about what it was. I don't care what you say, luck certainly does play into a detective's hand if that detective knows enough to take advantage of the opportunity when it is presented. And to tell the truth, the drowning man who grasped at the fabled straw was not any more desperate than I was the night a pair of crossed wires started me on the way to a big arrest. But that part comes later," she added.

"Three weeks before, one of the big mercantile companies of the city had discovered a $30,000 loss. The police department believed that James Whitney, by which name we shall know the embezzler, was still in the city. It was my duty to find him.

"Did you ever seek a man who was hiding from you in a city of two and a half million people? For twenty[illegible] days I sought. I had invaded every possible place where the man might be. I had shadowed his friends. I had watched the house in which he lived, I had men stationed at every depot. I had followed out every bit of a clew—and all had resulted in failure. There was not a thing left to work on. There was not a possibility on which to rest a hope that I might find the man I sought. And I knew that every day brought my chances of making the arrest to smaller and smaller proportions.

"And so it was one night that I came into the hotel here. I was tired; I was discouraged. And so I determined to do that thing which I have done many times before when I have been blue and worn out and tired—telephone home to my little kiddie, and have her tell me over the 'phone all the things that have been happening in her young life since I left her in the morning. When the world of crime seems dark and forbidding, it is good to hear the voice of a little child in your ears, detailing to you all the adventures of her dollies, all the things she has been doing, all the playing she has been indulging in. And so I walked to the operator and asked for my number."

Then it was, as there came an interruption in the form of a waiter, that I saw the reason that Alice Clement seems always young, always happy, in spite of the morbid, grewsome half of the world in which she makes her living. She has her foil in her little girl, and the reaction takes away the stain of the world of darkness. Miss Clement glanced around the room and continued.

"I had hardly gotten my number when there came a great buzzing and crackling on the line. I jerked the receiver away from my ear, held it out a moment until the noise would cease, and then called 'hello' again. The answering voice was that of a man.

"'Well, what became of you?' came the question.

"I started to tell him that he was talking to the wrong person. Then something, I don't know why on earth, caused me to answer differently.

"'I wasn't sure of who this was,' I answered. The reply caused me to take more interest in life. There was something about the remark—well, do you believe in intuition? I do.

"'Has anybody called up? Have they got on to me yet?'

"'Not yet,' I answered. 'But goodness only knows what is going to happen. They're hot after you.'

"'I know it,' came the answer. A queer thrill shot through me. That voice of the man on the other end of the wire had been described to me. I knew it was only a chance in a million, but I determined to take it. Luck it seemed, was playing into my hands.

"'But, Jim—'

"The effort brought fruit. There was a quick gasp from the other end of the wire.

"'Nix on the names,' came quickly. 'Now, listen. We've got to beat it and beat it tonight. Do you know how to get the stuff?'

"'The money?'

"'Yes.'

"I felt a cold perspiration on my forehead.

"'Jim——' I said in a frightened tone, 'I——I've forgotten.'

"'You've forgotten?' shot angrily into my ears. 'What do you mean by ——'

"'Don't be mad with me,' I begged; 'I've had so much to think about. I've been so frightened, I've——'

"'You weren't frightened yesterday when I called you up.'

"'I was. I have been frightened all along. Only I've—I've just been a bit braver about warding it off than I am tonight. I don't know what's the matter—I'm just afraid, that's all.'

"'Well, cut that sort of stuff out. Now, listen. You go to the old shop and look in the switchboard. You'll find the stuff there. Then come on and meet me by the statue at 10 o'clock. I'll have a taxicab. Go out the way we talked of, in case anybody's watching. Understand?'

"'Yes.' I answered. I heard him hang up the receiver, and just as quickly, I plunged the hook up and down with all my strength.

"'What number was that I was talking to?' I asked Central when she answered. There was a delay of a few minutes, and then came the answer. Hastily I scribbled the number on a piece of paper and called information.

"'What address has No. Blank?' I asked.

"She consulted her directory and gave the name of a place near Lincoln Park. It was enough. I hurried out of the hotel and to detective headquarters.

"'Captain,' I said, 'what have you to do tonight?'

"'Nothing,' he answered. 'Why?'

"'I think you're going to have a prisoner or two to sweat. Is there a man on the force who can run a taxicab?'

"'Certainly,' was the answer, and the captain grinned at me. 'What's the excitement?'

"Hastily I told him of what had happened. I looked at the clock. It was eight o'clock; two hours in which to work. In five minutes a man in khaki was before me. In two minutes I had told him everything I wanted done, and in another thirty seconds we were speeding for the home of the embezzler."

"Why there?" I interrupted. Miss Clement laughed.

"You never can wait, can you?" she asked. "We were going to the home of the embezzler simply because I had learned that instead of only the man being mixed up in this thing that the wife had a share in it too. And I wanted to get her away before there was any change of plans.

"We neared a drug store. I called to my policeman driver.

"'Right here will do,' I said. He stopped the machine, went inside and into a telephone booth. 'Make your voice a bit rough,' I told him as he entered. 'And don't talk any longer than you have to. Say that you'll be in the machine waiting.'

"I watched him through the big windows. I saw him run through the names in the telephone book, select the one he was after, then call for the person. There was a short conversation. He came out of the booth and climbed on his seat.

"'We'll run around the block a couple of times,' he said, 'and then we'll go there.'

"'Did she seem surprised?' I asked.

"'Yes. Asked if I had the money with me. I told her I did, and that I'd be in the taxicab, and that just as soon as it stopped to run out of the house and jump in; that we didn't have much time and there were a bunch of people watching us. She'll be on deck.'

"A few moments later we stopped in front of a good-looking apartment. There was a short wait, and the [illegible] swung open and a woman, heavily veiled, hurried forth. My taxi driver leaped from his seat, opened the door as she rushed forward, then closed it behind her as she entered the taxi. She was excited; I could hear her heavy breathing as she stepped into the vehicle. In the corner of the machine she saw my dark form and stretched forth her hands to me.

"'Jim!' she cried.

"There was a clicking sound, and even in the darkness something flashed. The woman gave a scream that sounded even above the whirring of the machine as she felt the cold steel handcuffs on her wrists. I anticipated her question.

"'My name is not Jim, but Alice,' I said. 'You will see Jim presently, for he is about to be placed under arrest also. Now, sit down there and be as calm as you can, for I want to ask you some questions.'

"The answer was a blow that caught me full in the face. With a great effort the woman had shot her manacled hands forward and the steel had struck me between the eyes. It dazed me, but I reached gropingly outward. I tried to seize her as her locked hands worked clumsily with the catch of the door. My fingers seemed nerveless. Great splotches of red flared before my eyes. I screamed. Then all grew black.

"When I revived, I was still in the rocking, hurrying taxicab, and vaguely I wondered what all had happened—and what had become of the woman who had struck me. I became aware that I was crowded far into a corner by a great form and that some one was whistling. We passed a flaring street lamp. I saw next to me the hulking shape of my old friend of the uniform, Tom Malloy.

"'I got hep to somethin' on th' corner,' he said, by way of explanation, 'when I seen th' door av th' taxi open an' a woman jump out. Then, when I seen thim wrist decorations, I knowed there was a party av some kind on. So I just joined in. Bless me, s'long as there's a man about, 'tis a quiet little dame she is, isn't she?'

"This was addressed to the opposite corner of the taxicab, where the wild-eyed woman sat gritting her teeth. I saw the hands that had felled me tight and clenched. And I was a bit thankful that big-hearted, big-fisted old Tom Malloy was with me. Gradually I learned all that had happened. Malloy had seen the woman leap from the machine and start to run away. Believing it was a case of attempted white slavery or something of the kind, he had hurried forward, just in time to intercept the woman. The officer at the wheel had stopped and was hurrying back. Mrs. Whitney's little attempt to escape had failed, and Malloy decided, as soon as he saw me still slumbering from the effect of the blow that I had received, that he had better make a little trip to the station himself.

"A few minutes more and we were at headquarters. At least one of those concerned in the theft of $30,000 had been captured. But the real prisoner was still free.

"'Maybe we'd better take you home,' the driver suggested, as the desk sergeant booked the arrested woman. I turned him a pair of flashing eyes.

"'Send me home?' I demanded. 'Well, I should say not—at least not when there's a chance of catching a man I've been looking for as long as I have Jim Whitney. The next thing on the program is to put Tom Malloy in the taxi for an anchor, and drive as hard as you can to a point near the statue of General Grant in Lincoln Park, and there——"

Slow-minded me! I simply had to break in for a question.

"But, Miss Clement, all you knew about the thing was that the telephone call had come from a place near Lincoln Park."

A smile of commiseration was turned on me and it lasted as long as the waiter remained at his task of removing dishes. Then when the field was clear of listeners again, Miss Clement allowed the smile to turn into a full-grown laugh.

"And you call yourself a—well, I won't say it," she bantered. "Don't you know that a man who was in the circumstances of Jim Whitney wasn't going to do any more wandering around the city than he had to? He telephoned from a place near Lincoln Park. The nearest statue to that place is the statue of General Grant. Therefore——" She smiled at me again and I waved a hand.

"Were you right?" I asked. She did not heed the interruption.

"I told the man at the wheel to get to the statue as soon as possible and appear hungry for a fare. If he got me in the machine, all right. If he didn't—then it was up to him to find the machine I was in, and to find it in spite of everything that might exist. I boarded a car.

"I never saw a stretch of path that was longer than my walk toward the statue. At every form I started—half believing each was the man I sought. I was not sure of his face in the dim light, I was not sure of his general appearance. Every spark of my intuitive powers was at work. I had my chance there to find the man I sought—and I had to make good. I neared the statue. A man started forward. For one brief second, something within me impelled be to rush forward. Then came a check on my nerves, just in time. He passed under the light. At a glance, I knew he was not the man I wanted.

"A vague fear seized me. In spite of the fact that I had put on the clothing of his wife, in spite of the fact that my face was concealed by a veil, there was the chance that he might understand, that he might know I was not the woman he was looking for. How I prayed for that taxicab! At last a chortling sound came from down the roadway. I had sheltered myself in the shadow of some trees. A glance outward and I saw the form of a man emerging from the darkness behind the statue. I saw him raise his hand. The taxi came to a stop. I heard him give some instructions in a low tone. I knew that he was ordering the driver to take a short spin and then return.

"My eyes seemed to burn in their sockets. Just for a glint of light that I might see the man on the seat! Just for a—the machine started slowly. I saw the driver was my man. I rushed forward. I raised a hand and stopped the machine. I leaped to the door, opened it, beckoned over my shoulder and hurried in, to plump forgetfully into the lap of my old friend Tom, the patrolman.

"The man in the roadway seemed to hesitate. I leaned forward and called to him in an excited whisper:

"'For God's sake, come on! They're after us!'

"He hurried forward and lingered at the door of the machine.

"'Did you get it?' he asked.

"'The cash? Yes, get in.'

"'Drive to the Englewood Station!' came the terse order. Then, as he climbed in, he whispered: 'We'll have to make a change in here. I've got a wig in my pocket. I'm going to put it on, and I want your clothes to go with it. I think I can get past in the station that way and get the 10:20 out. You go back home then and get into some other clothes and come on the next train. You'll have to be a real man for a while tonight, Marie,' he joked. I smiled in the darkness.

"'Now for the change,' I said.

"I drew hurriedly back as Tom Malloy slid forward. Almost before he knew it, James Whitney, thief, was sitting next to a big policeman and that big policeman's hands were clamping hard on his wrists. This time there was no struggle. There was no chance for one. Within fifteen minutes Whitney was in the police station and the captain was taking his confession.

"But there was one thing he would not tell—what he had done with the money. I did not care much, for I believed I knew. Near the Whitney apartments was an old carpenter shop that once had been equipped for electric lights, and then the wires taken out. I hurried to the place. I had made a few inquiries of neighbors, and found that the place had recently been rented for purposes unknown. I laughed to myself. At last I was rounding out the evidence in a case that had seemed hopeless to me twelve hours before. I asked some flatdweller for an ax.

"'A what?' he replied in surprise.

"'An ax; I want to break down a door,' I showed him my star. He gave me the best thing he had—a long, heavy iron rod. Then, just to show that he had the real sporting blood in him, he went along to break down the door for me himself. A rashing blow or two and the old door yielded. I lighted a match as I went inside. Far in one corner, almost covered with dust, shavings and debris was the old meter box. I sprang for it, dug away the coverings with my hands, and excitedly reached inside. A roll of something touched my hand. I gave a cry and brought it forward. Money. I reached again and found a flat package of bills. And then, regardless of the man with me who stood open-eyed, lighting matches, I sat on the dirty floor and began counting money. And it was not long before the choking sensation in my throat had resolved itself into tears that filled my eyes. Every one of those bills was a silver certificate. There was not a yellowback in the bunch. Out of the $30,000 he had stolen, there was less than $200 left. And that is all that was ever recovered, for that is all that existed."

"But then," I said, as Miss Clement finished her story, "it was something to catch the embezzler."

"Yes," she added, a bit sadly, "yes, it was something—but it wasn't the $30,000. I wish that orchestra would start pretty soon. Have you heard that new song from 'The Modern Eve'?"

The next story in this true and remarkable series of narratives of Alice Clement will appear in next week's Ledger. It is called "Fitting a Crime to the Evidence." Don't miss it.

Kitty and the Cowboys

By J. GREENMAN HOWSER

THE whole bunch piled onto Fatty continual. It seemed that every time he showed his round physog they each and every—likewise and several—would be playin' horse with him.

It wasn't 'cause they didn't like Fatty, for they sure did, but you can't tell nothin' about how or why a thing may strike 'em, and Fatty was sure a unfortunate-lookin' feller if he was lookin' for any big amount of respect to be showed him.

In the first place, Fatty was blond like a woman and a lot like one in shape. You know the kind—full-breasted and broad-hipped—but I always thought it was his face more than any one thing that always started 'em. You'd think that in time they'd get used to it and let him alone, but no matter what was doin'—busted down grub wagon, cows stampedin', or anything—just let Fatty come loomin' up on the scene, and dern me if they wouldn't turn to laughin' and joshin' him.

Fatty was as good as a circus for keepin' the bunch in good humor, and the foreman kinda encouraged him. You'd a thought he'd 'a' discouraged the bunch, but he didn't, and I thought he played it kinda low down on Fatty—but that's neither here nor there—for Fatty took it good and plenty out of their hides before he got done with 'em and they hadn't nary a peep in 'em afterwards.

You see it was like this: One day me and Fatty was eatin' dinner together and thinkin' up seventeen kinds of physical torture we'd like to put on the cook for dishin' up such grub for decent self-respectin' men to eat. The rest of the outfit was a-settin' round waitin' for Red to come with the mail. It was time he was comin' and we knew he'd be hungry as all such skinny fellers always is, when they all jumped on Fatty, havin' nothing else to do—pullin' and a-haulin' of him till he got plumb mad. Then they kinda sensed they'd gone far enough.

So as I ses, we was all a-waitin' and one of the fellers jumped up and hunts a big piece of wrappin' paper and after writin' on it for a spell he pins it up on the door.

We all crowd around to see what he had wrote, and it read this a-way:

"TAKE NOTIS.
BAR CIRCLE WANTS A COOK—
BLACK, WHITE OR YELLOW.
GOOD MONEY IF YOU CAN COOK
GOOD. KEEP AWAY IF YOU
CAN'T OR GAWD HAVE
MERCY ON YOU. WE WONT.
THE BUNCH."

That just suited the layout, and one of them rode away to the forks to nail it up where everybody a-passin' up or down country could see it.

So while we was discussin' about the prospects of havin' a decent meal's victuals and a new cook, to take the place of the son of perdition that was a-puttin' the stummicks of hard-workin' men on the bum, Red comes in with the letters. Fatty gets two and I nary a one. Fatty winks at me as he goes out, and I follows him pretty soon after.

He goes around back of the bunk house, and by the time I gets there he'd read 'em and was a-waitin' for me. He hands me one to read, and it says:

"Mr. Thomas Green. Be on hand when court opens on Wednesday morning. I sent you word last time, but you didn't come. If you are not here the sheriff will come and get you.

"Yours resptfully,
"JAMES BROWN, State's Attorney."

Fatty expectorated some unusual and seemed a-meditatin' more than was natural.

"It's pretty middlin certain," says Fatty, "that Mr. Thomas Green—that's me—will be there on time."

He stands for a minit. Then all of a sudden he slaps his leg and begins laughin' fit to bust.

Course I didn't get his look in so couldn't help him enjoy hisself, but as soon as he could talk he elucidates. Fatty explained that he'd got a real live plan for getting' even with his bunkies, but he can't work it alone. Will I help?

Surest thing I know. So we sets down and jacks up the scheme in its weak places. Then he writes a letter and puts in the envelope of the second letter he got, which wasn't no more important than a bill for some damage that Fatty had done when he had broke loose down to the irrigatin' works at Lone Dog; but the envelope itself was the whole works in the scheme for Fatty to get even. Then with a few more laughs and a poke in the ribs, Fatty pulls down the corners of his mouth somethin' mournful and we file back to the grub house.

The bunch was still settin' round readin' their letters and talkin' and all excited. Soon as Fatty hove in sight they started in on the same old kiddin' of him, but he never took no notis. Then they sensed that he was some worried. As I said before the bunch had a likin' for Fatty, and they all come flockin' around to find out what was a ailin' him.

Fatty without ary word passed over to the foreman the letter that he had wrote back of the bunk house, takin' it out of the envelope good and regular. The foreman read it and passed it along without a word to one of the bunch, while they all crowded around so as to read it.

The letter was just like this:

"Dear Brother: You have been away from home for eight years, and I'm tired of waiting to see you. I'm going to start for Lone Dog in time to reach there on Wednesday evening. Meet me sure at the train. Your loving sister,
"KITTY."

Then the bunch broke loose. The fact of havin' a woman in camp looked good to them, and each feller was tickled to think she was a-comin'. What was a-puttin' Fatty in such a fit of down-and-outness they couldn't size up. So he pulls the lawyer's letter on 'em, and when they had read that they got a line on what was a-ailin him. So with a whoop they proceeded to take the natural worry offen him by tellin' him that they'd see to Kitty, that he needn't worry no more about her.

"We all will entertain Kitty, you better believe. Kitty? Well I should say so. Say—Fatty, what's she like?"

"Would she size up about like you?"

The bunch wasn't intendin' to be too free none about Kitty, and so Fatty knew. There wa'n't no disrespect in 'em, it was just their way, but there ain't one of the bunch but would have backed down the whole rest of 'em, if there had ever been anything said disrespectful about any decent-actin' woman.

Fatty kinda perked up a bit then, and

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he started to fold up his letters and put them away, and then he kinda looked foolish and smiled a sort of smilin' apology, and he said sort of funny-like as they was standin' round him: "Well, say fellers, Kitty, you see, is twins."

They was plumb locoed, that bunch.

The foreman crowded up to Fatty.

"My Gawd—Fatty! Is there sure two of them?"

Fatty gulped and swallowed hard—then he yelled at him:

"Who in blazes said anything about there bein' two Kittys? It's Kitty and me's twins."

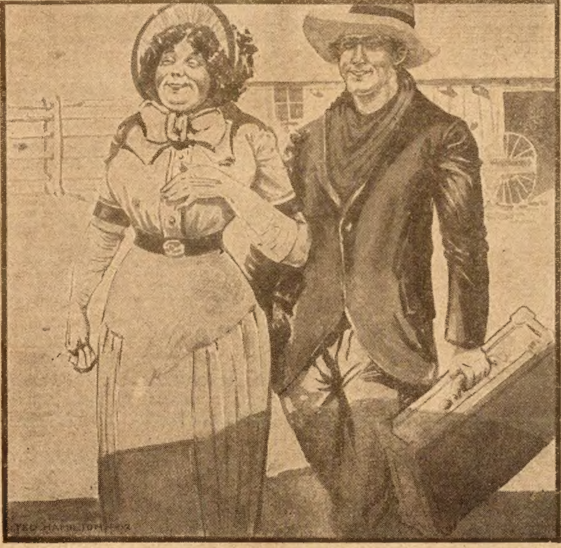
Then the bunch begun all over again, and they done stunts to Fatty, and me a-lookin' on, till internal I nearly died a-laughin' it was so gol dern funny.

The next day was Tuesday, and Fatty had to start to the county seat so's to give him time to get a night's sleep before he'd have to go into court, so he left, and I went with him to Lone Dog. I had been intendin' all the time to drive him over anyway. That give us a chance to finish our gettin' ready to fix out the bunch as he had planned.

There was an old shack on a disused road that nobody had lived in for more than a year, and Fatty and me, after ridin' into town for what traps was needed, come back to the old place. We had spent most of the day gettin' things ready, and Wednesday found him and me a-puttin' into effect the preparations we had been a-makin'.

Fatty must 'a' knowed a heap more about women than I did, for he had bought a lot of things that I never heard tell of before, and when he tried 'em all on, I felt real bashful—like I always do when women folks is round. But say—maybe we wa'n't a tenspot winner when he had them duds all shipshape as the sailors say.

Fatty had hair the color of corn silk before it's ripe, and you never noticed it was curly till he got them clothes on. Bein' short, with his smooth moon face and two cute little chins, you'd never have no thought of its bein' Fatty. Of course, Fatty's skin was some tanned, but it didn't look no ways red when he was Kitty—just a nice, clean, healthy look that made you feel kinda happy in under your ribs when you just looked at her.



You'd never have no thought of its bein' Fatty.

I was plumb surprised to know how I thought a heap more of Fatty and had more respect for him, when I see what kind a way he looked, and how you felt toward him in that riggin'. Most any man I ever knowed of would 'a' looked coarse and ornery dressed that a-way. That's what I mean. You knew that he must be plumb decent to be able to look like a good, decent woman. If you don't know what I'm a-drivin' at, try dressin' that a-way yourself, and you'll understand, and Fatty was no sissy boy neither.

Well—Fatty tells the foreman that he wanted me to go after Kitty, so the next day I starts to the train. Of course, the bunch must be on hand a-guyin' me unmerciful, seein' as how I had put on a new neck handkerchief and spruced up some on account o' Kitty, but I let 'em josh, a-thinkin' what was a-comin' to them and about overdue, so I grinned and was right good-natured about it.

They want ary one of 'em, but would 'a' been tickled to death for my job, but I had a cinch on that, so I drove off in the buckboard with the two cayuses in front of me, goin' about a mile a minit. They'd only been twice drove before, and I ain't joshin' when I say them horses kept me plumb busy keepin' 'em from goin' right up in the air and racin' with the wind. They was some devilish that trip, but I got Kitty all right, and at the time I knew they'd be expectin' us, me and Kitty comes a-sailin' up and the whole gol dinged bunch on the lookout, you can believe me.

I drove up with a grand flourish, and you'd 'a' laughed to see how they all had primped up, but one or two was too bashful and sneaked into the bunk house. You can gamble they was sizin' up Kitty from the window, for they pretty soon came scatterin' out promiscuous-like. By the time I had helped Kitty out and started to get her grip, every mother's son of 'em was plumb stuck on Kitty.

I was some tickled to see that the whole blamed bunch was togged out something wonderful and the surroundin' scenery was lit up by the colors doin' duty round the necks of the whole bunch in the shape of their newest silk handkerchiefs. I wouldn't 'a' believed they'd 'a' bit so great, but there was no denyin' that they was each feller out for a killin' and no mistake.

I never did think how men was so dad-blamed soft and easy till I saw 'em, every mother's son of 'em, a-struttin' around pullin' their mustaches and a-twiddlin' their little fingers something fierce. I knew that Kitty was enjoyin' it, too, for she stood a-waitin' for me to get her traps, and she was turnin' round a-lookin' at each one, Shad the thin foreman in special, and Red the biggest limb of Satan in the bunch.

As I handed down the suitcase, Kitty swings it up and starts to carry it into the house, but I jumps forward and takes it away from her as polite as a basket of chips, and I starts to open the door. Shaddy and Red both made a dive to open it at the same time, and bumped heads so's you could hear their skulls crack, and both held to the latch, a-glarin' at each other like a couple of old bulls tryin' to see who was boss.

So I took Kitty up to her room and set her suitcase and a parcel or two down on the floor. I had to hurry back, or I'd 'a' give the whole thing away, I was so near bustin' to laugh. Everything was a-workin' as though the skids was greased, and I knew when the bunch started to slide down, the way was so blamed easy and slick they'd never stop till they got to the furtherest limit, they was that plumb locoed.

Supper was set on the table, and every geezer was a-settin' in when Kitty comes in. You should 'a' seen the scramble to get on their feet, and no great wonder, neither. There was that blamed Kitty lookin' cuter than you'd think. To be sure she was some fat, but a woman looks mighty different, more especially when the woman's got curly hair and cute blue eyes that's kinda sassy. And that's what Kitty's were—not bold but blamed sassy, and her whole outfit was so rolypoly and cunnin' you wouldn't believe.

Fall? My Gawd—yes! They fell like flies hangin' round a molasses plate with poison in it. There was a lot of complainin' and apologies when the cook brought in the grub, and they all turned to the sign on the wall that called for a cook, which was a face smile of the one nailed on the tree at the forks.

They was all talkin' vociferous about bein' starved with the chink which was a-masqueradin' as a cook, and Kitty said she had read the sign callin' for help up at the crossroads, and she laughed cute and said she thought as how it was plumb funny, and Shad had to tell Kitty that he was the smarty what wrote it.

Then the cook brought in the coffee, and it was so rank that the bunch forgot themselves for a minit—and they all felt sore and humiliated to think that Kitty had to eat and drink such stuff. They each and every one fell upon him, and when they let him go he was a-carryin' a sample of all the kinds of devilish dishes he had made up and called grub, on every part of his head and body. The cook was madder than he ever was before, when they made him eat his own cookin' and swore he'd get even with the bunch if it took a leg. I was glad it happened, for Fatty and me needed an extry hand to help in puttin' the outfit in the discard.

They was all talkin' after the cook was chased out, and Kitty jumps up all of a sudden and claps her fat hands together, and lookin' round at the bunch as sympathizin' as anything, ses:

"What's the matter with me a-getting supper and cookin' till you can get somebody? The cook can do everything just the same, only the real cookin' and I'll do that. May I?"

The whoops that was the answer you could a heard a mile. So Kitty started right in to get a meal, and every one of them gazaboes was hangin' around a-wantin' to help—but she made 'em clean up the mess in the grubroom, and then fired the whole bunch till supper was ready, leavin' only cooky to help.

When the bunch got up from that meal that Kitty had cooked, every man was hog-tied as to his feelin' for Kitty. Havin' a woman around made things seem homelike, and as for me, knowin' the whole game as I did, I had to go outside the bunk house and kick myself out of my feelin's—I was that daffy.

All next day every feller hung round and couldn't seem to ketch on to business no how. Shad the foreman got real put out when he wanted to send Red to Bar X ranch, and after a-lookin' for him everywheres, rounded him up a-standin' before Kitty with his hat in his hand, a-twirlin' it round and round, and almost a-drulin' when he was a-lookin' at her.

An when it come evenin', the whole bunch was that close on time when grub was ready that Shad was some sarcastic and was castin' remarks to the bunch about sneakin' away early so's they could curl their pritty hair and put on their fixin's. And the outfit just set and looked foolisher than any girl you ever see, and took it all real ladylike.

After supper doin's was over, and nothin' stirrin' in the way of chores, we was all layin' round or settin' near the door waitin' for a chance to ketch a sight of Kitty.

Sure enough, after a while the door opened, and Kitty was a-standin' real cute in the doorway. After talkin' for a spell she goes back in, and sets down in a rockin' chair right across the room from the door, and leaves the door wide open.

Say—mebbe you don't think she made a hit at this new appearance, as the play folks say. She had put on another rig, all told and believe me it sure was a winner. Whatever it was I ain't no ladies' man to be tellin'—but they was pritty blue flowers—big nice bunches, scattered all over it and they was just the color of Kitty's eyes. And the whole bunch gave one groan when they saw her, for every feller was a-wishin' she belonged to him and a-thinkin' how happy he'd be if she did.

Well, she set a-tantalizin' 'em till at last Shad, thinkin' that he was the smart Elec of the outfit, and had a hunch that none of the rest had sense to think out, starts to the door to have a confidin' talk with Kitty. That didn't hitch none with our plans, and to start things off accordin' to Hoyle, Kitty calls to me casual, and I breaks my neck a-hustlin' to answer her prompt.

So I gets in before Shaddy can, and he can't keep me out, 'cause she called me herself, and he goes back and sets down again madder than a wet hen. When I gets inside the room where she was a-settin', Kitty tells me to shut the door, and then we was ready for the show to begin.

I goes back into the cookroom and talks to the cook, who is washin' up the dishes, and tells him what I wants him to do—but not a word about Kitty not bein' Kitty—only for him to do just what he's told, if he wants to get even with the bunch, which makes him feel some happy. Then I hide away where any one comin' in can't see me, and Kitty goes to the door and opens it again. Then she sets down like a nice fat spider a-coaxin' of the flies to please come into her net—which they sure do.

Shad didn't give no feller a chance to get ahead of him again, he was just that fierce, and slammed the door shut hisself. After a few minutes the boys was lookin' for Shad to come out again, but Kitty just opens the door casual and sets there nothin' unusual. Then the bunch was dead sure that Shaddy had got his from Kitty, and bein' ashamed to show his face before the bunch had gone outdoors through the cook house door.

Kitty sets and rocks and rocks, and each one of the bunch goes a-sidlin' in after pullin' at his collar as if it was a-chokin him, and a-slickin' down his back hair, and each time Kitty come to

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(Continued on page twenty-one.)

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AN AEROPLANE ELOPEMENT

Or, THE WINDS OF CHANCE

By STANLEY F. MATTHEWS

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Begun in No. 43, Oct. 26. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO MEN AND A GIRL.

ON THE way back to the cabin the wounded aviator gave such positive evidences of weakness that, regardless of the black looks of Jack, Polly insisted on coming to the rescue, and passing an arm about the waist from the other side. This was just what the artful Karl had hoped to bring about; and from that time on he managed to drag himself along fairly well. But if the truth were told, he evidently received more sustaining power from the frail girl than the muscular young mountaineer.

They did not carry on any sort of conversation on the homeward walk. Karl was supposed to be too weak to talk; and as for Jack, he was undoubtedly mentally cursing the fates that had brought this good-looking stranger across his path, and the possibility of his being compelled to remain for an indefinite time.

Of course, if it came to the worst, there might be a sudden visit by a band of disguised White Caps, who would take the objectionable party out into the woods, give him a dose of whipping, perhaps a coat of tar and feathers, and then start him along the trail leading to the nearest town, with a death penalty hanging over his head if he ever dared turn around.

Karl could guess that some such thoughts must be passing through the mind of his rival, judging from the looks on his face as he turned now and then to observe the two on his right. But given a fair show, and Karl cared not the snap of his fingers how deeply Jack hated; if only Polly would consent to the bold proposition he might consider it his privilege presently to advance, they could laugh at any puny effort made to stop their flight.

Finally the cabin was reached again, and it was remarkable how the wounded man seemed to recover after arriving there. When they wanted to help him inside, so that he might lie down on the cot again, he positively refused to go.

"I'd much rather sit outside here, thank you," he declared. "The feeling of weakness seems to have almost wholly passed away. And it will be much more cheerful being outdoors. You know the mind has a great influence over the body. I'll get well quicker by staying here, than by going inside, I promise you."

Well, of course after that Jack did not insist. Anything that would hasten the cure of this unwelcome guest of the Johnsons was agreeable to him. He even saw to it that Karl was comfortably fixed in the chair; but he gave no sign of intending to take his departure. When the elder Lawson mounted to the seat of the wagon that had brought them, Jack called out that he was not intending to return home just then.

"Yuh see, suh, I kinder promised Polly I'd finish thet ere leetle box I was a-makin' foh her; an' 'sides, she done invited me tuh dinner today. Jest yuh git 'long, dad; reckons as how yuh kin tote that stuff from Pudge Larkins yuhself, cain't yuh?" he called out.

Of course, Polly could not remember having invited him to stay; but since he had in times past found favor in her father's eyes, she did not raise her voice in protest, though exchanging a meaning look with Karl that told him how the land lay. Jack was bent on intruding, just as long as he could find any available excuse for doing so. He could not bear the idea of leaving Polly in the society of this handsome stranger. His jealousy was up in arms already, and he felt in duty bound to hover around, so as to prevent the situation from getting any worse.

At dinner Karl found that he was feeling so very much better that he insisted on declining longer to be treated as an invalid.

"I'm determined to join the rest of you at the table, and from the way my appetite serves me, I think I'll do my share in making way with that appetizing mess. To tell the honest truth I can hardly wait until the call comes, I'm that hungry," he had said, when Polly proposed that he take his way back to his cot, and be waited on.

"That's the way tuh talk!" exclaimed Jack, grinning with pleasure. "An' arter yuh hev fed, suh, p'raps now, yuh mout be feelin' like gittin' off tuh finish yuh race ag'in' time?"

"Well, that would be fine; only I'm afraid making so quick a turn might send me back again, and do more harm than good. But I sure feel more like myself. And all the while I keep thinking I was wrong in my first diagnosis, and that there isn't even a single rib fractured, only a severe sprain."

So he took his place at the table, and for the time being seemed to entirely forget such a thing existed as pain; for he exerted himself to make an impression on old Luke, for divers purposes which shall be nameless, since they might be misunderstood. The old moonshiner did seem to take quite a liking to his uninvited guest, for there was a charm about Karl's manner, when he tried to exert himself. Polly, too, seemed to hang upon his words in a fashion that made Jack more glum than ever. All he could do was to sit there, playing with his food, for which he seemed to have lost his appetite, and watch the others from under his heavy brows, now and then frowning as though secretly nursing his anger.

There would probably come a time when this rough son of the mountains could no longer withstand the torments that raged within his soul, and when he would give free rein to the evil passions that were being aroused by his jealous hatred toward the newcomer. Karl knew this full well. He only hoped that when such a time did arrive he would have advanced his cause far enough to be able to laugh at the desperate efforts of the other to injure him.

All that afternoon did Jack linger around. When he had finished the box he was building for Polly, having a fair knowledge concerning the use of carpenter's tools, he bethought himself of something else which he wanted to do. And so the chill of his presence and constant espionage hung about Karl like a wet blanket, so that he came to dislike the other almost as much as Jack undoubtedly did him.

But, of course, there came a time when Jack had to go, though he took his departure most unwillingly. Before he went Karl saw him corner the girl, and have an animated conversation with her. Whatever it was all about, Jack did not seem to have derived any particular consolation from the exchange of views; for his brow was darker than ever when he suddenly turned on his heel and strode away.

Polly, too, looked rather sober as she went about her duties. Karl saw that she cast an occasional anxious glance toward him, and guessing what was in the wind, he presently beckoned her to come nearer, which she did, since the coast seemed clear at last.

"Be careful how you act," she warned as she came up; "for he may not have gone far, after all."

"I only wanted to ask you one question," said Karl, quietly.

"Yes, and what might that be, sir?" she went on, with a mock attempt at making a curtsy, as though he were in truth next door to a stranger.

"Did that fellow make any threats to you?" he demanded.

"Oh! Jack wouldn't hurt me; I've never thought that of him!" she exclaimed, but he knew from her manner that his guess was close to the mark.

"But he would me, and gladly, too, I imagine. There's no need of telling me what he said, but it would be just like the coward to try and bring you around to his way of thinking by threatening to do me some personal injury. Once for all, please never think of allowing yourself to fall into such a pitfall. I do not fear Jack Lawson. He may be a stronger man, and all that; but I am not without a means of defense; and he will find that out to his cost if he tries any of his cowardly games on me."

This was not said in a boastful spirit; but with a calm assurance that told how every word was meant. Doubtless her fears were in a measure tempered with the belief that Karl could take care of himself in an emergency. But then, since coming to this wild country the girl had heard of so many tragedies that the very atmosphere seemed to reek of violence, whenever men's passions chanced to be aroused.

"I will never be happy until you are safely out of this country," she said, in a low tone intended only for his ears.

"And on my part I will never be contented to go until you promise to accompany me!" he retorted, at which her face paled more or less as she hastened to add:

"Oh, but you must not say that, for it would be impossible, incredible; I——"

"You once gave me your solemn promise, and I never released you from that vow. Why stay here any longer, subject to persecution, if you choose to decline the attentions of such a man as Jack Lawson?" he interrupted her by demanding.

"My father——"

"Even he could not protect you, in case the other side showed the most strength. You told me yourself that a truce had only been declared between the Lawsons and the Johnsons during the last year, because both heads were of a mind that there should be a union of the clans in your marriage with Jack. Listen! if that event is rendered impossible through your declining the honor, how long would it be, do you think, before these savage mountain tribesmen would be at one another's throats again? And what would be the inevitable end of such a war of decimation? What but the probable death of your father, and your forced marriage with a man your soul loathes? So think seriously over what I am proposing, darling. It may, after all, present the best means for solving your problem, without sacrificing a single life. As for your father, if he has come to care for you, perhaps he might join us in some other part of the country later on. That is my plan. And oh! I beg of you to consider it carefully before sending me away again, with empty hands."

He had made a start when overwhelmed by his feelings, and nothing must stop him until he had freed his mind of what was in it. Perhaps the seed might thus be sown that would germinate, and expand into a glorious flower erelong. But while he thus talked, Karl did not raise his voice, or make any extravagant gestures, such as would be apt to betray the nature of their conversation to a hidden watcher. Indeed, he managed to control himself to such a marvelous degree that it might be thought they were simply discussing the merits of some new discovery, of which the girl exile was hearing for the first time.

He knew that he had made a powerful impression by the mere force of his logic.

And then there was that mention of her father, together with the probable fate that was apt to overtake him in case the hatchet were ever dug up again between the two clans, and the fifty-year-old feud reopened. Despite his brusqueness, Polly had evidently come to feel a certain amount of affection for the old man. Perhaps, under his rough exterior, he may have been something of an unpolished diamond. Besides, she had cultivated that spirit of filial duty so steadfastly now, that it had become almost second nature with her.

She looked at Karl long and earnestly, even though making no reply in words. Then she slowly turned, and went into the cabin; but Karl felt satisfied that what he had said must have made a deep impression. Whether it would yet bring forth fruit was a question he could not decide just then.

The future must seem more dreary than ever, now that she had once more found herself face to face with the man she had once promised to marry, and learned from his own lips that his affection for her had never changed. And there was that ungainly Jack forever hovering within the boundary of her mental vision, eager to seize her and carry her off. She could not think of him without shuddering; and perhaps in the end the possibility of his resorting to strenuous methods in his rude courtship might cause her to decide as he, Karl, wished, and flee with him, so as to end it all. For if such a thing occurred with regard to Jack Lawson, it would not be the first time a bold wooer had carried away the object of his worship; for in the Great Smokies men are very much the same in many respects as those of primitive times, when might always prevailed, and to the strong went the spoils of war.

The afternoon had now waned, and once more evening drew on apace. Karl found himself compelled to forsake the courts of love, and again grapple with the serious problems that confronted him. He wondered if fortune meant to deal kindly with him on the coming night, and whether he would be given an opportunity to track old Luke to the hiding-place where he ran that notorious still, which so many bold revenue men had sought in vain?

Luke had come back again, and sat around, waiting for the call to supper, with the gloaming gathering about the cabin. And Karl began to notice that the old man was acting in an unusual manner, so that he felt it worth his while to watch, in the hope of guessing the meaning of his strange demeanor.

He would follow Polly with his eyes, and then nod to himself in a suggestive way, as though there was that in his thoughts to give him more or less satisfaction. And after a time the young aviator began to feel an uneasiness creeping over him.

CHAPTER VIII.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

"Now, I wonder why he carries on that way?" Karl was asking himself, as he continued to keep an uneasy eye on the old moonshiner. "He smiles every little while, and rubs his hands together as though particularly pleased over something. Has he discovered a gold mine in those hills? It can't be that he's tumbled to who and what I am? Whew! I hope not. But then, that's absurd, for he seems to have eyes only for his daughter! Confound it! What was that

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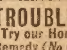

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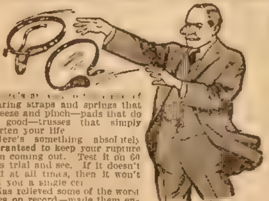

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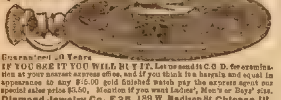

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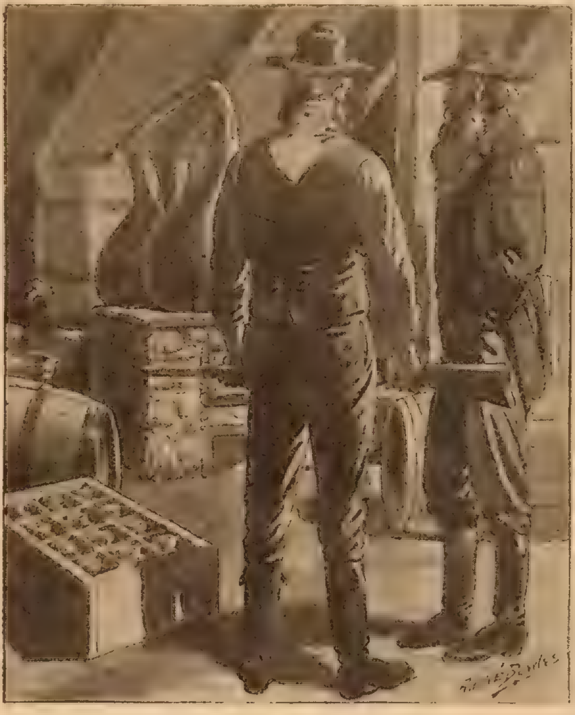
he said at supper about Phineas telling him something interesting this afternoon? Then he was with old Lawson; and perhaps they've hatched up some little game, calculated to overcome Polly's objections to the adoring Jack."

That was a decidedly unpleasant thought. It fairly made the young aviator wince when it flashed athwart his mind. And yet, the more he turned it around to survey it's several sides, the [illegible] became his suspicions.

Old Luke was certainly rolling some sweet morsel under his tongue. His manner proved this beyond all contradiction. And it was positively conn[illegible] with Polly; else would he never have watched her, smiling and nodding to himself from time to t[illegible].

"And the worst of it is," Karl mentally groaned; "that the silly old man thinks he is doing his duty by his daughter. Girls never know what is good for th[illegible] so these grim mountaineers believe, [illegible] be compelled to partake of the [illegible] [illegible]t is placed before them, whether [illegible] hungry or not. Well, perh[illegible] star was in the ascendant [illegible] when I took up that dare, and started to do what no fellow has ever been able to accomplish—find the secret still of old Luke, and perhaps effect his captu[illegible]

He felt no shade of pity for the [illegible] old moonshiner. The man had h[illegible] own against the best revenue officers of the force all these years. If his fall came at last, it would be only the natural ending of a life spent in defiance of the powers of the National Government, whose right to tax them [illegible] ply making moonshine liquor in their primitive way they persistently denied.



"Say, yuh got her all rigged up!"

All his thoughts were for the girl. She would suffer if her father were caught and jailed; and yet, with that other dread alternative facing her, a hateful marriage with Jack Lawson, after all it might prove to be the choosing of the lesser evil. Now and then Karl found himself remembering the dark expression on the face of the said Jack, after his little talk with Polly.

"She told him plainly that she could not listen to his suit with favor," mused the young aviator; "and he went away, doubtless vowing that what he couldn't win by fair means, he would by fo[illegible]. The plot is certainly getting prett[illegible] thick; and if it wasn't for the fact that I'm here on another tack, I'd surely be tempted to carry the dear gi[illegible] in my biplane; for it wouldn't be the [illegible] time it's voyaged with two aboard. I may have to do it yet, if so be matters grow too warm for my comfort; but nothing must tempt me to quit, without she agrees to accompany me, nothing!"

He had not slept his usual span on the preceding night, owing to many things, among which might be mentioned the astonishing discovery he had made concerning Polly; and also the uneasiness caused by Jack Lawson's evident intention to win the moonshiner's daughter whether she willed or not. Still, Karl was not in the least sleepy. He believed that a crisis in his affairs was near at hand. Perhaps things were destined to happen on this same night calculated to bring matters to a head.

With this prospect before him it pleased Karl more than he could say to know that there was an avenue of escape open to him. Should these savage moonshiners collect, with the idea of laying violent hands on the stranger who had dropped by apparent accident from the clouds, if given fair warning he could laugh their anger to scorn, once seated in his biplane, with an open space in front, and the engine ready to respond to his call.

But he really hoped old Luke would [illegible] in on this night, for he wanted [illegible] him, should the thing seem at all possible. How could he excuse his ac[illegible] to Polly? What sort of a story [illegible]t he invent that would account fo[illegible] leaving the cabin? He disliked deceiving the dear girl in the least; but when one assumes the role of spy, and is alone in the enemy's country, he m[illegible] play the game. It was while he was puzzling his wits in order to hatch up some plausible reason for leaving the cabin, in case Luke went, that he heard the sounds of footsteps without.

Most of the cabins belonging to the [illegible] guarded by some sort [illegible]. It might only be a yellow mongrel cur; but no matter, the animal would possess a bark that gave warning of any prowling human being. Where deadly feuds e[illegible] and men sometimes carry on their warfare through lighted windows, it [illegible] essential that [illegible] by a faithful sentry, capable of remaining on duty the livelong night, and detecting the approach of an intruder, creeping with hostile intent toward the habitation of his enemy.

Luke had seldom been without such a living alarm clock; but it chanced—fortunately for the success of his plans, Karl had more than once told [illegible] that the dog upon which this duty had latterly developed, had met with the usual fate of his class, being badly torn in a fierce encounter with another brute, [illegible] succumbed to his wounds. [illegible] were not easy to secure in this region, where their true value was so thoroughly appreciated. Hence, whoever it was comi[illegible] [illegible]t intimation those within the Johnson cabin had of his presence was when a stumble without told that some person had made a m[illegible].

"Thar! I clean forgot that ere a [illegible]" remarked old Luke; "an' I sure hopes he ain't run up ag'in' the sharp edge."

He did not appear at all worried, as might have been the case a year or two in the past. The old-time blood feud between the Johnson and the Lawson clans had been called off; and for a whole year now there had not been a single funeral in either family; which was a fact hitherto unknown.

Karl even began to suspect that the old man knew who this late visitor might be, he seemed to exhibit so little concern. Then he thought of Jack Lawson again. Was it possible that they had all hatched

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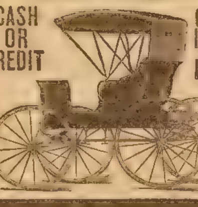

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up some scheme, whereby the Lawsons, father and son, should descend upon the Johnson cabin in force, and literally compel poor little Polly to assent to a speedy union with the man she detested. At that Karl drew a long breath, and felt glad that he was not altogether unarmed. He saw that the girl, too, looked uneasy, but from the way she glanced toward him it was plain to be seen her anxiety concerned his safety alone. If so be Jack and some of his clan were without, their visit might mean violence toward the man from the city, who had dropped down into their midst without an invitation

Polly had dropped the knitting upon which she was starting. She hastily arose, and once more interposed her dear form between the open window and the figure of her lover. It was an act of devotion that spoke more eloquently than words. Karl need never again doubt the extent of her love, when she showed so perfect a willingness to assume any risk, in order to screen him. Deep down in his heart he was saying that it were well worth facing any kind of danger, in order to discover that Polly loved him so truly.

But now the heavy steps sounded close to the door, and there came a knock, not hesitating or timid, but loud and aggressive, so that it gave the young aviator a thrill, and somehow caused him to let a hand creep back to the pocket in which he carried a deadly little automatic pistol of the latest model. Luke stepped to the door, and without first laying hands on his gun, too; which remarkable act proved what a great change had come over the old moonshiner since peace had been declared between the feud families.

A heavy voice was heard speaking; then the old man answered back, after which more excited talk followed. Try as he would Karl failed to catch what was said; even though an occasional word, spoken louder than the balance, drifted to his ears.

He saw that Polly must have heard enough to arouse her interest. The girl had advanced several steps, and was standing there now, with her head on one side, just as he could remember seeing a robin when on the lawn listening for the slight movement of a worm projecting from its hole under the grass. Her whole attitude told of excitement. Evidently what she had heard must have aroused sudden fears in her heart.

Then old Luke turned back into the room. He never even vouchsafed one glance toward Karl, but striding straight over to where his rifle stood in a corner, he picked the weapon up, after which he passed out. The mumbling sound of their voices dying away down the little dirt road told that, whatever the nature of the news that had been brought to the Johnson cabin, the old moonshiner had been influenced to go away with the mysterious caller.

Of course Karl was breathing easier now, at any rate. His fears in connection with those pestiferous Lawsons had proved to be groundless, it seemed, which he considered a matter of congratulation. But his determination to follow old Luke on this night, in case he went out, now flashed before him. The occasion had arisen, and he must make a virtue of necessity, in order to seize it.

So he started to his feet, and reached for his hat. This significant action, of course, could have but one meaning, and he was not surprised to find Polly instantly at his side, her hand on his arm, her troubled eyes fixed on his face.

"It was Dolph Grenfells!" she exclaimed; "and father has gone with him to their cabin, which is a quarter of a mile along the road, the one that has the whitewashed stable just behind it."

This calmed Karl a little. He realized that, with such information in his possession he could readily overtake old Luke, even though the other had a fair start. Besides, his curiosity had been excited, and he thought it might pay him to learn what it all meant.

Polly undoubtedly knew, or at least must have a pretty good suspicion. So he turned to her with a question on his lips.

"What has happened to start your father out in that way?" he asked.

"Oh! it was the news that Dolph brought," she replied, looking at him anxiously.

"News of what?" he continued.

"I heard him say they were gathering at his place, and meant to comb the hills, but what they would find him; and dad has always been one of the leaders in all such hunts, you know."

"Hunts—and in the night time, too? I never knew that any game was gone after except 'coons or 'possums, when the moon hung up there in the sky. But surely such a gathering would not take place merely to chase down a few inoffensive 'coons. The game in this case must be of another character, Polly. Tell me, is it a man they want to find, when they comb the hills?"

"Oh! yes. He said that word had come about another of those foolish revenues being up here somewhere, trying to locate stills; just as if all the dreadful things that have happened in the past ought not to have been sufficient warning to keep them from risking their lives that way."

Although he himself had begun to suspect something along this order, her words certainly gave Karl a cold chill. Could it be possible that he had been betrayed by some incautious remark on the part of his fellow officers; heard by one who played the part of a spy, and sent word to the mountaineers when any move against their peace of mind was on foot?

If this were really the case, then his flitting might be more hurried than he had up to now contemplated; for well he understood what a short shrift he would receive should he fall into the hands of those maddened mountaineers, with the nature of his mission known.

Her eyes were fastened upon his telltale face, and he knew that Polly must have guessed something of the truth right then and there. Well, the explanation would be saved him, at least; for in this crisis there could be no time to enter into details. Action was what was needed, and prompt action, too, if he hoped to accomplish anything worth while.

"Oh! tell me, Karl," she was saying, as she somehow clung to him; "tell me, are you that man they would shoot down like a dog, or hang to the first tree?"

He knew the folly of longer trying to conceal the truth; fate had forced his hand, and there was no other way but a frank confession.

"Yes, it is true, my dear girl; I am that man; but believe me, I never dreamed that you were here when I agreed to take my chance in these mountains," he replied.

CHAPTER IX.

A SWEET PLEADER.

Then Karl did a queer thing, considering the circumstances—bent suddenly forward and kissed the lips that had so often, in those well remembered days of the halcyon past, warmly responded to his ardent caresses. The temptation was more than he had the power to resist, since she clung to him, and every look and action proclaimed her affection of the past to be unchanged.

Polly, although undoubtedly thrilled by the disclosure he had made, was in no wise dismayed. She seemed to possess one of those natures capable of rising to meet new and unexpected occasions requiring prompt action. He knew from the way she was staring into his face that the dear girl must be wrestling with grave doubts and fears concerning his safety; and yet when she sprung the disclosure, it startled him.

"You must leave here then, immediately, Karl!" she said, with a gasp, and an involuntary tightening of her clutch on his sleeve.

He looked down, and smiled. "You say one thing, my darling, with your lips, while hands and face seem to tell me another. Why should I go in such haste; they can hardly suspect that the Government has taken to sending aeroplanes into the mountains, to aid in carrying out the letter of the law. They surely can have no reason to suspect that I am other than I seem; for my wager is genuine, at least; and I am supposed to be trying to make Knoxville inside of three days."

"It is not that, Karl; but somehow I seem to see his hand back of this!" Polly exclaimed, with a shudder.

"Meaning our jealous friend, Jack Lawson?" he queried; stroking her hair with the tenderness of the old days, and feeling the familiar thrill as he looked into the liquid depths of her blue eyes, now filled with concern because of him.

"Yes, Jack Lawson, who seems to have

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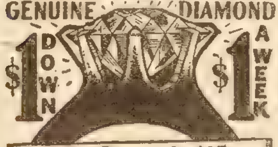

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conceived a silly fancy that he must have me for his wife, whether I chance to care for him or not. Oh! I could read what terrible things were passing in his mind as he watched you; just as a cruel cat would a poor little squirrel that was frisking about, at the base of a tree. He is a man with a violent temper, Karl, and I am afraid would hesitate at nothing in order to accomplish his object."

Just so," he declared, promptly; "which is all the more reason why you should listen to what I was proposing. It is not safe for you to stay longer in this region. That fellow will give you no peace, unless you consent to accept him. You cannot afford to take chances, darling; and there is no positive safety except in flight. Why not go with me when I am leaving here, and end it all? My biplane will carry two; and once aloft we could laugh at any effort to stop our flight?"

"But I was not thinking of myself, Karl," she hastened to say; and he noticed with secret delight that she no longer positively declared against his proposal. "It is you who may be in deadly danger right now—not because you are connected with the revenue service but on account of the fact that we have been all in all to each other in the past."

"And are again—say that, dearest!" he insisted, holding her spellbound by the power of love in his eyes.

Yes, yes, why should I deny it? You hardly need words of mine to tell you that, dear Karl. But oh! please do not linger here. Even now they may be creeping up on this cabin, bent on carrying out the mad designs of that furious man!" and she tried to push him toward the door as she spoke.

Karl was bewildered. There was so much back of her words that he realized how densely ignorant he must be.

"Tell me," he said, "what is this you fear? Who are the men Jack Lawson may be bringing here, and for what purpose?"

"Don't you understand—Dolph Grenfells is his cousin, and his particular chum. I fear that he has entered into a covenant with Jack to draw father off on this pretext, knowing that he would not allow a guest under his roof to be dragged away and treated harshly; for even here in the mountains the demands of hospitality are highly respected. So they have lured him away with this story about the suspected presence of a revenue in the hills. That would leave you almost at the mercy of the mob when it came here."

A light broke in upon Karl. She had seen deeper into the desperate plans of the jealous mountaineer lover than even his practiced intellect had been able to delve.

"You mean that this has been only a ruse to get your father away; and that soon a band of happy-go-lucky spirits will be here to treat me to a coat of tar and feathers; after which I may be ridden out of the mountains on a rail!"

"Oh! yes, that is what it means, I am sure, Karl!" she cried; "and now you can see the necessity of your going immediately. I am only thinking of the shame of it, that you, a wounded man, should be treated so harshly, and made to flee."

"Don't bother about that part of it, my dear girl; because possibly my ribs may not be fractured after all, you see. Sometimes, in playing a game of this kind, we men of the revenue service have to match a Roland with an Oliver. But what if I should take you at your word, and go forth; those men would presently arrive here, perhaps with their faces concealed behind masks, or bandana handkerchiefs, so that your father might never be sure of their identity. Not finding me, might they not vent their ill humor on your innocent head?"

He said this in a way that told what his feelings were; that if there seemed to be any danger of such a thing happening he would accept any risk rather than leave the girl he loved better than his life, to face unknown perils. But she scoffed at the idea.

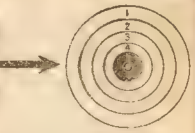
"No, no, you must not think of it, Karl!" he said, hastily. "They fear my father too much for that. I can tell them that you left the house soon after dad went, and seemed alarmed. Then, too, I shall put them on a false scent; for while you are making for the spot where your aeroplane lies, they will believe you have fled down the mountain."

"How thoughtful and resourceful you are, dear girl. And what happiness for me to know that I have found you again after all these weary months with a barrier no longer separating our hearts. Yes, I shall go forth as you ask me; but do not for a moment believe that I shall not return, perhaps sooner than you suspect; for I am determined that I shall never leave this region unless you agree to accompany me. Be thinking over that, Pauline, and making up your mind. It was the hand of Fate that drew us together in this strange way. What folly to try and evade its decree! We were intended for each other, and nothing, you hear me, darling, nothing on earth, shall keep us apart longer!"

He kissed her again and again, regardless of the fact that the shutters of the window were wide open, and the light burning within the cabin; so that if by any chance jealous eyes lingered without, [illegible] But with such a temptation, how could it be

(Continued on page twenty.)

The Stomach
Is the Target



Aim to make that strong—and digestion good—and you will keep well! No chain is stronger than its weakest link. No man is stronger than his stomach. With stomach disordered a train of diseases follow.

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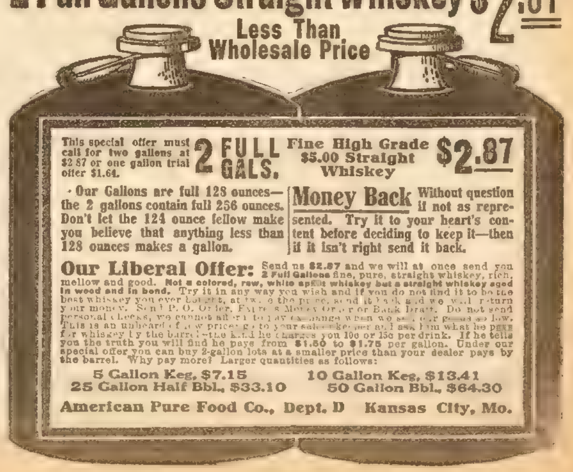

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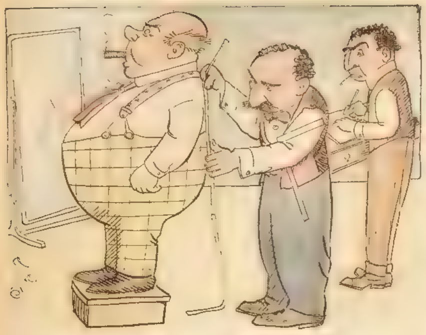


Tailor—"How [illegible] pockets in your trousers?"
Customer—"On [illegible] my wife is a very busy woman, and I want to save her time when she goes [illegible]"

THOUGHTS AT 3 A. M.

I like to think of [illegible] when I [illegible]
used to fix the [illegible] fires ere yet [illegible]
I used to [illegible] the horse and [illegible]
I [illegible] and think I needn't [illegible]
I [illegible] days when I [illegible]
[illegible] a [illegible]
[illegible] out and [illegible]
I [illegible] I needn't do it now

So They Do.

Bridget was fond of waiting at the door of the church and of complimenting the priest on his sermon. One day the priest remarked after an unusually strong [illegible]

"Now [illegible] you know that your compliments fall off of me like water off a duck's back."

[illegible] Bridget replied: "Yes, Father, but—the ducks like it."

Decidedly Unsophisticated.

Jack—"[illegible] I'm in love with [illegible] a [illegible] flower, fresh as a daisy. Why, she's never even been waltzed with."

George—"Well! well!"

Jack—"That's true. Never been anything but engaged a few times."

Her Own Money.

Father—"[illegible] new dress?"

[illegible] cross. I [illegible] own money."

Father—"Where did you get it?"

[illegible] for coal."

A Case of Mistaken Identity.

President Taft was out for his afternoon walk in Washington [illegible] a flaxen-haired [illegible] in front of him [illegible] and exclaimed in a [illegible]

[illegible]

The President [illegible] this [illegible]

[illegible]

"[illegible] "You're Humpty Dumpty!"

SONG OF THE LAZY.

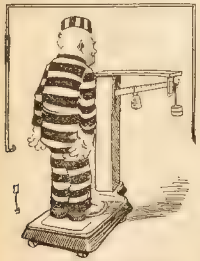
[illegible]

Overheard in Church.

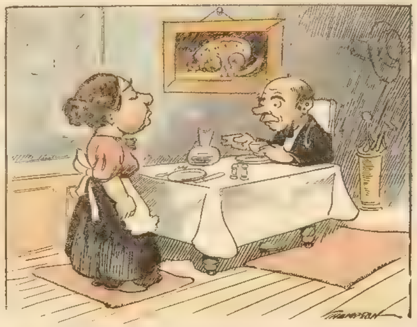
The fair [illegible] the church [illegible] ing [illegible] to [illegible] on her [illegible] good [illegible] returned and faced the usher.

"Some one is occupewing my pie," she said [illegible]

"Well, let me show you to another sweet," volunteered the usher.



"The weigh of the transgressor."



M[illegible] I must give you three days to pay your board!"
M[illegible]—"All right; suppose you make it Thanksgiving, Christmas and the [illegible]"

Now or Never.

[illegible] were putting down a [illegible] the end of his thumb with the hammer and began to [illegible] language befitting the [illegible]

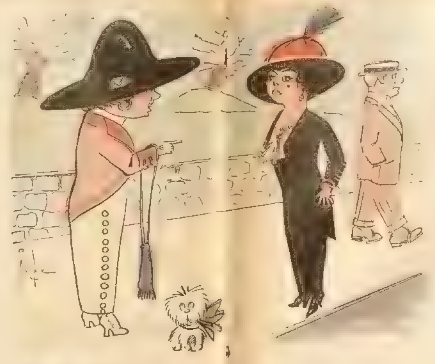
[illegible] Jeanie, [illegible] that way."

[illegible] If [illegible] now is the time to let me know it."

Safe With Father.

In a fearful thunderstorm one day, Baby Ida begged her older sister to take her to their father in another room. Just as they started there came a blinding flash of lightning.

"Sister," said Ida, "pray God to take care of me until I get to father!"



Mrs. Kn[illegible]—"Last night Mr. Banes broke every dish on the table."
Mrs. [illegible]—"Heavens—a fight?"
Mrs. Kn[illegible]—"No. The missus was away and he tried to wash the dishes with the [illegible]"

Overdid the Cure.

Doctor—"You admit that I cured you of insomnia; then why don't you pay my bill?"

Patient—"Sorry, doc, but I sleep so [illegible] pockets at night [illegible]"

How to Do It.

"What a lot of style the Browns are putting on."

"Yes, [illegible] a lot of creditors [illegible] are putting off."

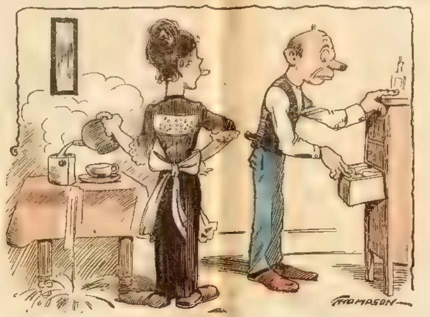
What He Got.

Jack—"So your wealthy aunt is dead. She left a last will and testament, I suppose?"

Tom—"Yes."

Jack—"[illegible] remembered you?"

[illegible]



Bilkins—"Where is my other cuff, I wonder?"
Mrs. Bilkins—"How absent-minded you are! Have your coffee first and we will look for it afterwards."

A Reckless Statesman.

Mr. [illegible]eatman—"Any more news in the [illegible] about the international yacht [illegible]"

[illegible]—"Are you interested in yacht-[illegible]"

[illegible] I was."

[illegible] sailor [illegible] handle a [illegible]

[illegible] Don't speak [illegible]

[illegible] You'd [illegible] of the [illegible]

Without Ambition.

[illegible]

Not Too Particular.

[illegible] city)—"I want [illegible]"

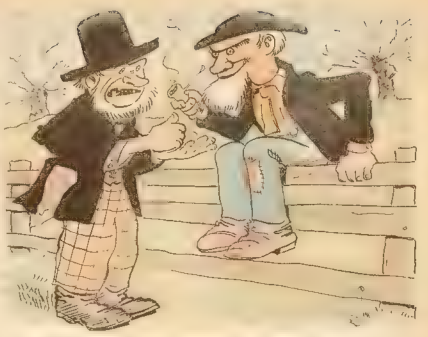
A [illegible] you looking for any particular place?"

[illegible]—"Well, not too durned [illegible]"

The Last Word.

He (during a tiff)—"I'd just like to know what you married me for, anyway."

She (viciously)—"I married you to reform you."



[illegible] to see if he can't recover my coat."
[illegible] why don't y' go to an upholsterer?"

She Couldn't Be.

Miss [illegible] at [illegible] when you were angry?"

[illegible] never [illegible] when I look in the glass."

The Succession.

A teacher was hearing the class in [illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] who [illegible]

[illegible] thought for some time, trying [illegible] call who came next in [illegible]

J[illegible] at last had a happy inspiration, [illegible]

"T[illegible]"

A Bloodthirsty Chauffeur.

The American—"Why did you leave [illegible]

[illegible] too tame. Why, I [illegible] month there, but since I became a chauffeur it's a poor month when I can't land twenty in the hospital."

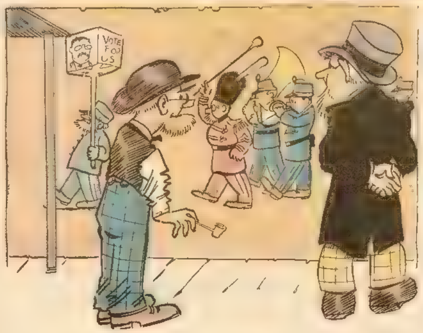
A Different Code.

The tenor sang an aria.

"Rotten!" bawled a spectator. "Take him out!"

"I'll take you out," said the usher, "if you keep insulting the singers."

"Excuse me," said the man. "I forgot I was at the opera, not at a ball game."



Hi Henberry—"Say, Lige, got any dehorning [illegible] in yer store?"
Si Storekeep—"Sure. Goin' to dehorn some cattle?"
Hi Henberry—"Nope. I'm on a committee to dehorn the Blue Grass County Silver Cornet band."

They Cry in Tragedy.

Friend—"Did you ever shed real tears on the stage?"

Actress—"Often. It's enough to make even an actress cry to be told, right in the middle of a five act tragedy, that the manager has skipped with the receipts."

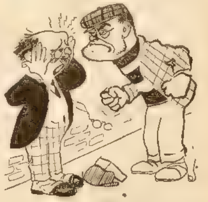
A Progressive Disease.

[illegible]—"How is your rheumatism getting [illegible]"

Bilson—"It's getting along slowly, but I'm very hopeful now."

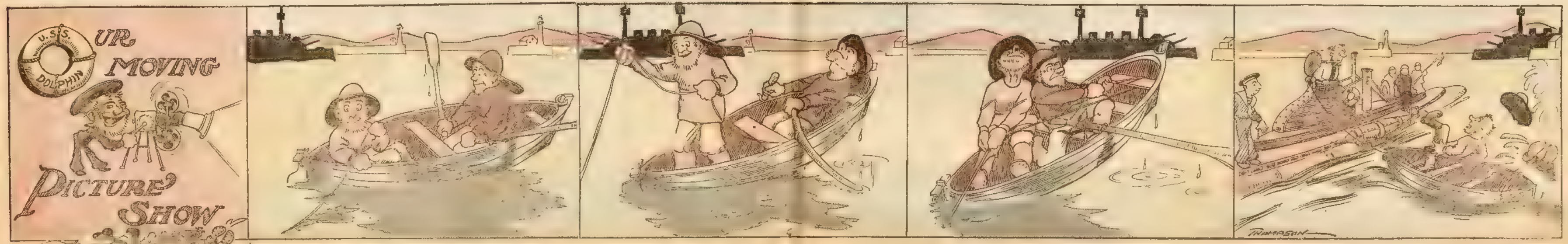
Jimson—"I'm glad to hear that."

Bilson—"Yes, it commenced in my feet and has gradually worked up to my shoulders. I'm in hopes that in about a week it will go off into my hat."



Mr. Meekinmild—"I've been hit on the head with a brick. Some one will suffer for this outrage."
Kid Bigmitt (who threw the brick)—"You think so? Who'll suffer?"
Mr. Meekinmild—"I will."

ONLY A SUBMARINE.



[illegible]

"We'll have a whale in a minute more, if the line don't break!

"Oh, it's a submarine, that's all it is!

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POLITICS

By Walter A. Sinclair

NOW that the feline is out of the bag now that the agony is over, let us yale the garage door, bulge up to the mourners' bench and get an earful politics! This is an autopsy and the pickled gent at the rear of the crowd, who wheezed "Hire a hall" need not dally to serve on the coroner's jury. However, before the tub oozes up Salt River, let us open the case and take out the works

There is no singular of politics, although we all agree politics is or are extremely singular. Who ever saw or heard a politic? Mayhap a politic is what is put on the bed where snooze strange bedfellows, who bolster up graft and frequently need Job's comforter. A single politic is like a kitten with no tail to pursue

Politics is from the Latin "poli" meaning many and "tics" meaning seconds of the clock, hence, "one born every second." If it were not for this birthrate, professional politicians would have to get busy with the shovel and pick if they expected to connect with the menu at [illegible] times

It took three men to work up the first batch of politics, one to induce the second to side with him against the third. By conning No. 2 into thinking he was easing one over on No. 3 by siding with the first guy, the latter, with a neat gesture, became a politician. If he had merely trailed, with No. 2 doing the live wire act, he would have been what is technically known as the simp, the fall guy, while touting No. 3 as the boob.

With this recipe in your mitt you can take a running jump to yourself and go as far as you like, multiplying the first three up to the handle. The answer is the same: Politics. Like Opportunity, Polly knocks at your door once—in four years, opens, hands you a bum cigar and a sour lemon, then faces down the pike after another come-on. So let us to our cases.

Whenever enough years stack up to [illegible] a sobby quartette, this glorious country becomes feverish and breaks out with a rash, or with rash promises. Eminent old docs toddle up and diagnose the patient, after which comes the consultation. Accent on the first syllable. One counsels operating, another fasting, a third the water cure, still another amputation and one more plenty of sleep.

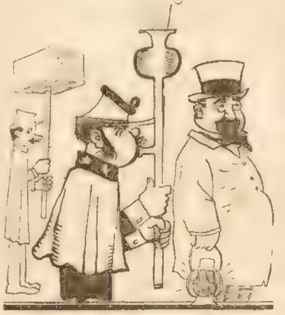
Doing a Jim Thorpe from the floor to the patient's front elevation, the M. D.'s jab their hoofs briskly over his map and tummy, disturbing his rest and foodings. From his strategic position, resting gracefully on his ear, the victim is expected to put Solomon in the feeble-minded class by exercising Wisdom until Wiz is panting for breath and perspiring copiously.

Lamping back at the last few blue-moons, we see a streak of hot air, punctuated with cigar butts and here and there, a noise like a $2 bill, which is some melody if you like music. Time was when a trail of eye-brows, teeth, finger-ends and uncalled for ears littered up the landscape on the cold gray dawn of the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. A mutt who refused to be glad-mitted into seeing a great light could be staked to a swell young illumination with a bump on the dome slipped him by some ardent convincer attached to a hunk of lead pipe. Nothing like it to get an idea through a solid cement roof.

In those frabjous days we took our politics straight and got quick action. The ripe cantaloupe who had the right to vote for his choice or a case note was wont to drape himself in a red, white and blue oil-cloth cap and cape, and to carry a tin-torch with a speaking tube attachment, up which he blew magnesia powder, causing an infant Mont Pelee to sizzle out of the muzzle and straight up through the grocery store awning under which he stood while giving his volcano selections. Thus, disguised as a rolling mill, the voter would do the big waddle around town, after which he paid the penalty of playing with fire by having his fingers burned on or after election day. Other kidney-footed patriots would wear white plug lids and carry kerosene lanterns. Would anybody dare tote a kerosene lamp or wear oilskins now? Not on your dissolved Standard Oil dividends! They don't even dare wobble the light of reason.

Starting with keynotes, the campaigns end with promissory notes. During the final throes, back-flaps and ground and lofty fits of the word schutzenfest, the candidates and other speakers shoot large messes of oratory at a pyramid of brains entitled The Average Voter. Now that there's nothing to fear by telling the truth, let us X-ray this mental Sandow and get his license number.

He's the guy who puts the X in circles. He's too hefty with that coco-filling gray matter to frivol with precinct primaries which eventually jimmy over into county nominations and shoe-horn into State conventions where the smooth boys who rig the pile driver for the big national league series are picked. Some of our very best little pickers are on the job at all times to turn the trick, and when Mr. Average Voter discovers he is a pickle, his noises are sour if he emits a bellow at all. He knows he could have picked better tickets blindfolded and in a dark room, but although there with an awful beef, he can only watch his barograph register the record for altitude and hope to volplane safely when he hits the air pockets.



Disguised as a rollingmill.

Or, maybe he is a good guy who always was regular at dashing the unknown quantity symbol under the party emblem and kicking goal quick. Human bipeds, who fritter away no 18 k. moments on such trifles as scanning the ticket, are allowed to back into a canvas crypt, put down X and carry one to the box with the slit, just the same as a tall forehead who has marcelled his thought-works on the overheated problems of the day. Frequently the result is the same or at least no worse.

Unlike a kiss, politics is nothing divided by several. At least, wisenheimers who have been taking a look-in say there's nothing in politics. This [illegible] line of bunk is received by the inhabitants of Missouri as a committee of the whole and referred to the Marine Corps. Gents who pass out this dope usually have fatty degeneration of the bankroll and a fixed prejudice against grand juries

In the past, politics devastated the country only once in four years but now it is in Continuous, and small time circuits at that. Noises who were so firmly glued to their jobs that it took a crowbar to pry them loose, once responded to all spiked questions by enfolding themselves in the grand old flag and uncorking a wad of words anent our nation's imperishable glory. This was 100 proof for corking any bleats by the unfettered populace, but it put no nourishment in the ice box. Now, the word-spouter has

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SCREAMED WITH JOY

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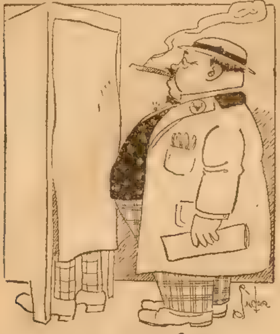
to get down to such hardpan as eats and where the coin is going to be copped. This puts a flat tire on any chin goods, for one frequently has to tell the truth.

Until recent years the real three-ply politics consisted in backing a skillet up to Wall street and making it hot enough for zobs primed with Uncle Sam's green goods to do the high dive from the fire into the frying pan. No politician was considered a live one who couldn't tap the plutes for a bale of kale to grease the skids for the big crash on March 4. Nothing like that in our national family now. Politics now consists in bawling out the other fellow for jimmying a bolt of cush out of a millionaire's till, and in keeping down the feverish lid on what the genial second story men of the prober's own political faith did to the trusts in the way of fat rendering.

There is no nutriment in reading about the gouge that was pulled off on a trust strong box in the dim past, while the party rough necks are honing to cut into some soft currency right now. Hence the pose of straddling the barb-wire which afflicts some of our most prominent little party workers.

Spell-binders were the real Herkimer when jaw-power wagged the American voter on his pivotal states. But the movies and canned conversation are the accepted Limburger now, and any little one-horsepower, air-cooled, runabout word-tosser who tries to edge in a few points with pride or peddle any views with alarm has to pay his listeners union rates.

The silent vote, that gabby glider, will take an ear portion of wax record flub spilled by a Presidential candidate and will look at a film wiggle, properly censored, showing the nominee trying to impersonate the plain people's friend in three reels, but the small caliber chatter-pusher gets the gate these days. Everybody is so used to having a President of these here United States or an ex-President or a would-be President duck off a blind baggage and begin walloping the welkin and treading the hustlings full of heel marks, that most of the downtrod who paused to sup up the words of wisdom and tabasco never miss a chaw on their eatings.



Those canvas crypts.

Aviation has had much to do with smearing our awe of heavier-than-air politicians. Any one who can pull new stuff gets a listen but nobody wastes a batch of hurrahs when some statesman slams the atmosphere.

Men can squeeze into a boy's size polling booth and slash a ticket until it looks like a cord portiere now, who once considered the occasion about as frolicksome as fitting a custom made wooden overcoat. Just because the booths are dark is no reason for a light vote. And when the rickety canvas voting stall leans lovingly on the shoulder of the voter while he is exercising his right to the franchise, he has no right to try looking theatrical and boasting that he supported the Original Booth.

A soprano note has been emitted in politics recently, and the obligato has struck some sour bars. Many a straightfront ticket has dropped into the lemon crate and politicians have been nosing into the fashion pages to wise up on the latest cut of ballots in order to catch the political debutantes. As a result, the polling booths soon may be designed along hobble lines with the high waist effect and with Robespierre collars, although many favor the pannier as giving the voter better chance to "scratch."

In conclusion, for the enlightenment of the uninstructed delegates, let us explain the technical term "straight ticket" which has gumshoed in. A straight ticket is one that has several crooks to it.

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Rustic Simplicity.

I was seeking a farm retreat, a quiet and soothing spot, away from the wearying surroundings of the sordid town; a restful place, among rustic simplicity and innocence; unsophisticated folk, though bluff and whole-hearted—a typical home of the soil, such as the summer boarder books tell about. The environment of the little wayside station where I alighted from the train seemed to give promise of the very thing. I was looking about me, when a stoop-shouldered man, with long, yellow whiskers, drove up with a load of milk cans. As I was watching him unload his milk, he said to me:

"Thinkin' o' buyin' a farm?"

"No," I replied. "I'm seeking a summer boarding-place on a farm."

"Land o' Goshen!" exclaimed the man, with a grin. "You've struck the right feller! I've got one o' the farmin'est farm boardin'-places that lays out o' doors!"

That was pleasant to hear, and I was almost ashamed to intrude business on rural simplicity; but I thought I might as well, so I said:

"Ah! What do you charge a week for board?"

"Well," was the answer, "that's accordin' to the situation. Want a hull lot o' p'serves an' setch, I s'pose?"

"Oh, no!" I replied. "Not such an awful lot."

"Willin' to eat with the family?"

"I wouldn't object to that at all," I said.

"Carpet on your room?"

"I think I would prefer a carpet—yes," I said.

"You'd 'spect meat an' 'taters, I s'pose?"

"Certainly. And eggs and milk, of course."

"Um-m-m! Milk is 'way up, I s'pose you know, now and as fer eggs—well, eggs is eggs more'n I ever knowed 'em. Was you thinkin' some o' havin' chickens, too?"

I replied that I had been turning chickens over in my mind some—yes; and I began to think that here was, indeed, a bluff and hearty example of rustic simplicity.

"Well, chickens," said he, "is goin' to be nigh as valuable this summer as the goose that laid the golden egg, an' if we kill 'em they'll have to come high. Any objection to workin' in the garden an hour or so before breakfast to sort o' skeer up an appetite?"

I smiled and said that the exercise would, no doubt, be just what I wanted.

"Kin you milk?"

"No."

"That's a little sort of a drawback to gittin' bottom figgers, but mebbe you won't mind helpin' load hay or stack wheat on a pinch?"

"I would rather enjoy that," I said.

"When night comes, I s'pose you'll play the banjo and sing them coon songs fer the folks?"

"I can't do either," I replied.

"Can't play the banjo nor sing them coon songs! Gosh! What kind of a city boarder be you, anyhow?"

I smiled and said nothing.

"Willin' to pay fer your washin'?"

"Certainly."

"And extra fer trouble if you git sick?"

'Most assuredly.' How much do you charge a week for board?"

"Cash in advance?"

"If you require it, yes."

"Goin' to stay all summer?"

"That is my intention."

"Well, I'll tell you. I'll have to see the old woman. I've thunk of everything I could, but she's a great thinker, an' mebbe there's a lot of other things—setch as only changin' the sheets wunst a month, washin' yourself at the crick mornin's, whether you don't think corn-husk pillers is better fer yer health than feathers, an' the likes o' that. So s'pose you come over and see us tomorrow an' fix on things. Be sure an' come tomorrow, 'cause I've took a likin' to you, an' tomorrow's washday, an' the old woman'll be so busy that mebbe she won't have time to think o' nothin' else an' on washdays we have a little the scrumptionist b'iled dinner that man alive ever sot down to."

But I did not go. I took the first train back, to find refuge from rustic simplicity in the sordid town.—Judge.

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Would Wait.

In Guymon, Okla., there is a preacher who is not only slow but long-winded. A stranger happened into the church about the middle of the service. He listened to the pastor's discourse until he began to think something was wrong, but there was no sign of a conclusion. Finally he reached over and asked the man in front:

"How long has that man been preaching?"

"About ten years," was the reply.

"Oh, well," he said, resignedly, "in that case I suppose I'll stay. He'll surely be through in a little while."

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Believing in Signs.

The patient in the Texas negress's home had recovered. The health officers came around to take down the sign.

"Sholy you-all ain't a-goin' to take down dat sign, is you?" she asked plaintively.

The officials replied in the affirmative.

"Now, ain't dat too bad! Dere ain't been nary a collector roun' dis place for weeks while dat sign 'uz up dere. Kain't you-all leave it dere, boss?"

This was too good. The sign remained.

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Chicago Ledger

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Published Every Saturday
By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.
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A woman's missing sense of humor may account for some of her funny antics.

If it's the unexpected that always happens, it's a wonder we don't get to expect it.

A pessimist can get more genuine pleasure out of a calamity than out of a blessing.

If a man isn't sufficiently original to manufacture his own lies he should stick to the truth.

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WANTED—Agents to sell rich looking imported 36x68 rugs. $1 each. R. H. Carter, Milan, Tenn., sold 115 in four days. His profit $51. You can do as well. Write for sample offer and unique selling plan. Exclusive territory. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

FREE—"Investing For Profit" Magazine. Send me your name and I will mail you this magazine absolutely free. Before you invest a dollar anywhere get this magazine—it is worth $10 a copy to any man who intends to invest $5 or more per month. Tells you how $1,000 can grow to $22,000—how to judge different classes of investments, the real earning power of your money. This magazine six months free, if you write today. H. L. Barber, Publisher, 453, 28 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

NEW Sterling Shoe Cleaner. Agents Bonanza. Automatically cleans mud, snow and dust from heel to toe on grown person or child's shoe in one operation. Profit actually 100%. Capable agents apply for exclusive [illegible] Hilker Mop Co., 1230 Grand ave., Chicago

AGENTS—Something new—fastest sellers and quickest repeater on earth. Permanent, profitable business. Good for $50 to $75 a week. Write for particulars. American Products Co., 6165 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, O.

$2 50 per day paid man or woman in each town to distribute free circulars and take orders for concentrated flavoring in tubes. J. S. Ziegler Co., 443 South Dearborn st., Chicago.

LOCAL Representative wanted in each town to sell Underwear, Sweaters and Neckties, direct from our factory to wearer. Permanent business, liberal terms, big profits. Every article guaranteed. Steadfast Mills, Dep't K, Cohoes, N. Y.

$3.00 to $5.00 per day selling our family medicines. We trust you and help you build a business all your own. Free samples. Write today. Ecktone Co., St. Louis, Mo.

BOOK Agents—Easy money. $5 to $15 daily. All the big sellers. Holiday Books, Wreck of Titanic, White Slave, Curse of Drink, Bibles. Best Commissions. Valuable Prizes. Freight paid. Credit given. Write quick for free particulars. Central Supply Co., Hesner Bldg., Edgewood, Iowa.

HAVE You a Few Hours to Spare? We Want man or woman in each town. No capital needed. An hour's work shows dollars earned in spare time. Pocket sample. 400% profit. G. C. Mfg. Co., 20 Warren St., N. Y.

PORTRAITS, Medallions, Photo Pillow Tops, photo china plates, frames, sheet pictures, etc., at prices below the lowest; guaranteed, rejects credited; prompt shipments; 30 day's credit; catalogue and samples Free. Jas. C. Bailey, Desk R-5, Chicago.

MONEY by Mail. Start a mail order business, or manage an agency for me, printed matter furnished for half the profits. Write for particulars. Hazen A. Horton, Desk 701, Tekonsha, Mich.

BIG Value Combination, 10c. Contains everything. Bradley, 287 South 3rd Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BIG Money Selling "Sunshine Cleaner;" Everybody buys. Send for 30 10c pkgs. When sold you get $1, or a valuable premium. Jas B. Sparks, Box 1453, Conway, So. Car.

$7.00 per hundred for collecting names and addresses. Steady work; stamp for particulars. F. Howard Co., Keymar, Md., Dep't [illegible]

FREE Pillows with every order. Great proposition. Fine goods. Mail us $10 and we send you new 36-lb. feather bed and give you 6-lb. pair pillows Free. New feathers. Best ticking. Freight prepaid on all. Satisfaction guaranteed. Fine chance for agents. Turner & Cornwell, Dep't G, Charlotte, N. C. Reference, Commercial National Bank

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THE Patentome is interesting and instructive. A liberal education in patents and how to get them. Free on request. Established 1865. Anderson and Son, Patent Solicitors, 713 G St., Washington, D. C.

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PETRIFIED Brazilian Beetle mounted in Scarf Pins, 12c; cuff buttons, 25c per pair. Latest novelty. Lucky Bug Co., 219 S. Dearborn St., Chicago.

HELP WANTED

ENTER U. S. Service; our book for one dollar tells how. Complete Study Course. Examinations now. The Chief, 5 Beekman Street, New York City.

BIG Money—Start Cleaning, Dyeing, Pressing business, no capital; learn by mail. [illegible] free. [illegible] School, [illegible] Parsons, Kansas.

BE YOUR Own Employer. Learn [illegible] Most [illegible] life portraits made. Work [illegible] and profitable. [illegible] tions $[illegible] David Minnick, Box [illegible]

YOUR brain will make $200 while your muscles make 50 cents. Write for proposition. Dunnings, Aulander, N. C.

FREE instructions with 100 Recipes [illegible] at home, no extra tools required. Price 35 cents. [illegible] Candy School, Coshocton, Ohio.

MEN [illegible] Wanted for Government [illegible] tions. Short hours. [illegible] Common education sufficient. Over 1,000 appointments coming. Influence unnecessary. [illegible] gible. Send postal immediately [illegible] of [illegible] open. Franklin Institute, Dept G 31, Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—A man or woman, all or spare time, to [illegible] information for us. Experience not necessary. Nothing to sell. Good [illegible]. Send stamp for [illegible] M. S. I. A., Indianapolis, [illegible]

FREE [illegible] Service. More than 40,000 [illegible] There is a big chance here [illegible] generous pay, lifetime employment [illegible] ask for booklet [illegible] Hopkins, Wash[illegible]

FEMALE HELP WANTED

MAKE [illegible] ...ing at home [illegible] plain [illegible] machine. All home [illegible] Steady. Sewers wanted in each town [illegible] ply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage, samples, etc. [illegible] if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers Sewing, "BL" Dep't, Rehoboth, Delaware.

YOU can write a short story. Beginners learn thoroughly under our perfect method. We help those who want to sell their stories. Write for particulars. School of Short-Story Writing, [illegible] Bldg., Chicago

LADIES can [illegible] at home, $[illegible] per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co. Dep't 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan

SALESMEN WANTED

WANTED—Salesmen and Saleswomen. Hundreds of good positions now open paying from $1,000.00 to $5,000.00 a year. No former experience required to get one of them. We will teach you to be a high grade Traveling Salesman or Saleswoman by mail in eight weeks and assist you to secure a good position where you can earn good wages while you are learning Practical Salesmanship. Write today for full particulars, and testimonials from hundreds of men and women we have recently placed in good positions; also [illegible] of good positions open. Address (nearest office) Dep't 199 A, National Salesmen's Training Association—Chicago, New York, Kansas City, Seattle, New Orleans, Toronto

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DRINK HABIT—Guaranteed home treatment three days—lifelong result. The only reliable. Book mailed free. Edw. J. Woods, 534 Sixth avenue, M 356, New York, N. Y.

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SONG Poems Wanted—Publication secured. Satisfaction guaranteed. D. E. Stoeckel, Mus. Bac., East Alton, Ill

WELL-KNOWN composer wants Song-poems, at once. Chance for successful writers to make a fortune. All poems not available will be returned promptly. Len E. Fleming, Suite 201, 1416 Broadway, New York City

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HOLIDAY Gifts—Pictures Enlarged. Mail us your choice Kodak film or good photograph, with only [illegible] cents, Postal Money Order, and get beautiful 8x10 Bromide enlargement. [illegible], 6[illegible] S. Forsyth St., Atlanta, Ga.

TYPEWRITERS $10.00 to $30.00. All makes. Rent [illegible]. Motorcycles. Phonographs, $3.00. Knights, 211 North 12th St., St. Louis, Mo.

LOVERS' [illegible] ...culating, four Photos, 15c. Lovers' Powder, 10c. All 20c. Ord, Long Beach, Calif.

COLOR Photography. Amateurs print your Landscape views in colors. No apparatus required. Send 2 cent stamp for circular. Isen[illegible] Bergen St., Newark, N. J.

[illegible] Compendium of Trade Secrets. Valuable formulas for business, household and farm. 50 cents postpaid. H. R. Huling, Lock Box 44[illegible], [illegible] Haven, Pa

WANTED [illegible] to read The Runway Girl, [illegible] sensation. Postpaid [illegible] cts. Box 1514 D, Paterson, N. J.

MALE HELP WANTED

$50 00 TO $100.00 A MONTH For your spare time—Experience not needed. Want active man each locality. Benefits for sickness, injury, death. Write quick. I-L-U 765, Covington, Ky.

SALESMEN Wanted—Young men, former experience unnecessary, qualify for road positions. List of openings. Big Salaries. Register with us. Write for particulars. Box 541, Charleston, W. Va.

MEN Learn Automobile Business, in ten weeks home study. $25 weekly job guaranteed. Earn $10 weekly while learning. Rochester Auto School, 952, Rochester, N. Y.

I WILL Start You earning $4 daily at home in spare time, silvering mirrors; no capital; free instructive booklet, giving plans of operation. G. F. Redmond, Dep't 400, Boston, Mass

REAL ESTATE

FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, [illegible] sub-divided into 2 4-acre [illegible] of [illegible] acres and one of 25 acres. The [illegible] tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, ice-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane, Wash. Pure water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois.

5 CENTS An Acre Cash. Texas school land for sale by the state. You can buy good land at $2 per acre; pay 5 cents per acre cash and no more for forty years, but 3 per cent interest on the balance. Send 6 cents postage for further information. Investor Pub. Co., Dep't 9, San Antonio, Tex.

ARE You Thi[illegible] ...uying Land? If so, investigate [illegible] opportunities. Won[illegible] 500,000 acres State [illegible] H. J. Maxfield, [illegible] Minn.

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FREE Reading by trance medium. Send date of birth—dime. Dr. Eagle, Saginaw, Michigan.

POSITIVE cure for Dandruff, Itch and skin troubles. Make it yourself. Prescription, J. J. McCleaskey, Boaz, Ala.

LEGAL Advice, Reliable, Personal, Confidential. Experienced Lawyers. Guaranteed. [illegible] Claims? Damages? Alimony? In[illegible] Marriage? One question, 25c; several, 50c. Circulars free. Legal Aid Bureau, Park Building, Cleveland; and Alliance, Ohio.

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LOVERS' Guide, or An Easy Road to Marriage tells "How to Court a Bashful Girl," "How to Woo an Heiress," "How a Lady Should Manage Her Beau to Make Him Propose Marriage," "How to Catch a Rich Bachelor," "Love Letters," "How to Win the Favor of Ladies," "Wedding Etiquette," &c., &c. All subjects treated in a manner that will be found most helpful to Lovers. This Great Book sent Postpaid for only 10c or 3 for 25c. [illegible]el Book Co., Hurleyville, N. Y.

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MARRY wealth and beauty. Marriage Directory Free. Pay when married. New plan. Ladies send description in first letter. Box 314 C., Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

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MARRY, thousands wealthy, anxious for early marriage, descriptions free. Confidential, [illegible] Market St., San Francisco, Calif.

LOVINE never fails. Every package guaranteed. Either sex 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100N, Palatine Illinois

A Kind Wife.

"I understand your husband is a candidate for office," said a suffragette out West to her sister in the cause. "Are you going to support him?"

"Oh, I suppose so," answered [illegible] ter, somewhat wearily. "I've [illegible] porting him for the last [illegible]"

* * *

STOPS TOBACCO HABIT

H. W. Elders, a physician located at 660 Main St., St. Joseph, Mo., has published a book showing the deadly effect of the tobacco habit, and how it can be stopped in three to five days.

As he is distributing this book free, anyone wanting a copy should send him their name and address at once. —Advertisement.

* * *

Men and Women Wanted

For Government Positions. Write to Franklin Institute, Dept. H 77, Rochester, N. Y., for free list of Government positions open.

—Advertisement.

Thoughtless.

"Your honor," said the arrested chauffeur, "I tried to warn the man, but the horn would not work."

"Then why didn't you [illegible] speed rather [illegible]"

A light [illegible] the prisoner. "[illegible] I never thought of that."

* * *

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

[illegible] St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy fo[illegible] confidence that [illegible] one [illegible] that [illegible] is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

* * *

Value of Time.

"Did your father punish you for not chopping the wood?" asked one small boy.

"Yes," replied the other. "But I don't know that it wasn't all for the best. Father and I passed less than twenty minutes in the woodshed and I am sure it would have taken at least three hours to chop the wood."

* * *

$5 WHISKEY FOR ONLY 12C.

Because of a fight which the Mail Order Whiskey Trust is making on him, M. Marcel of 930 Marcel Blk., Kansas City, Mo., has published a book in which he prints the trade formula of the Trust and exposes its [illegible] stating that the whiskey they sell for from $3 [illegible] gallon costs only 10c to 12c to make. He sends the book free to all who write for it.

* * *

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and redness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 521, Blairsville, Pa.

A Mystery.

It was 10 p. m., the moon was hid behind the cloud and most Sheridan Pa[illegible]ers were preparing for bed, when the "lord and master" of the first floor, north, stepped out on his back porch carrying a long box and a shovel. He tiptoed to the railing and peered right and left into the darkness. Seeing no one, and sure no one saw him, the mysterious person tiptoed down the stairs and stepped boldly into the prairie next door

He walked to the center of the lot and industriously began to dig. No sooner had he started his operations than several pairs of eyes from as many windows fixed their gaze on him.

"Hasn't that chap been having words with his wife, and aren't his movements most unusual?" were the questions which ran through the minds of the witnesses. The silent worker continued to dig, and the convictions of the onlookers grew with each shovelful of dirt. Each one unknown to the others ran out the front way and they met on the sidewalk. There they whispered their suspicions. Murders had been revealed like that.

Presently a policeman returning from his day's labor approached. His aid was enlisted and the party, which then numbered six, proceeded to the vacant lot.

They walked up to the digger in a sort of semicircle and were about to pounce on him when he suddenly straightened up and saw them.

"Hello, fellows!" he shouted. "Just in time. I promised the wife about a month ago to get her some dirt for her flower boxes, but I plum forgot. About two weeks ago she reminded me of it, but I was so blamed busy I didn't get a chance to do as I promised. Friend wife nagged me ever since, so tonight when I got home I grabbed a flower box and now I'm filling it. Glad you came along."

There was a long and earnest argument as to which should "buy."

* * *

His Indebtedness.

Shortly before his death, the late Chief Justice Fuller presided at a church conference. During the progress of a heated debate a member arose and began a tirade against universities and education, thanking God he had never been corrupted by contact with a college.

"Do I understand the speaker thanks God for his ignorance?" interrupted the chief justice.

"Well, yes," was the answer; "you can put it that way if you want to."

"All I have to say then," said the chief justice, in his sweetest musical tone, "is that the member has a good deal to thank God for."

* * *

Consultation.

There was a venerable and benevolent judge in Paris who at the moment of passing sentence on a prisoner consulted his associates on each side of him. "What ought we to give this rascal, brother?" he said, bending over to the one upon his right. "I should say three years." "What is your opinion, brother?" to the other, on his left. "I should give him about four years." "Prisoner," said the judge, "not desiring to give you a long and severe term of imprisonment, as I should have done if left to myself, I have consulted my learned brothers, and I shall take their advice. Seven years!"

* * *

To Encourage Honesty.

Business Man—"No use talking! What is commonly considered business integrity is as near honesty as you can expect while things are as they are."

Clergyman—"What changes would you suggest to raise the standard of honesty to a higher moral plane?"

Business Man—"Well, for one thing, we'll have to make the poorhouse more comfortable."

* * *

Amusing the Children.

Mrs. McShantee (triumphantly)—"I see ye are takin' in washin' again, Mrs. McProudee!"

Mrs. McProudee (whose husband has lost a paying job)—"Sure, it's only to amuse th' childer. They wants th' windies covered with steam, so they can make pictures on thim."

FREE SUIT

This well-known company makes this startling announcement: To advertise our high class made-to-order clothes, we will make you a fine suit to your measure and give you a chance to get it without one cent of cash. Act quick—before someone [illegible] gets ahead of you. This suit will be the best you ever wore. Show it to your friends—tell them casually who made it.

We Mean Exactly What We Say

Be wide awake to this big smashing opportunity and send in your name at once. This wonderful offer is absolutely on the square. We are a [illegible] known Chicago firm whose word is as good as [illegible]. If you don't know our [illegible] honesty and square dealings, ask National Bank of [illegible], Chicago.

We Send 70 Samples To Pick From

also style charts, measurement blank, tape, etc., without any obligation on your part [illegible] as soon as we get your letter, and we pre[illegible]. Remember, the time of this offer is [illegible] if we wanted everybody to know about [illegible] and to answer it are just the type of men we [illegible] your name and address to us at once—NOW

SPE[illegible] CO., Dept. 156 Chicago

P. S.—[illegible] a few more live hustlers to earn $5 to $10 a day [illegible]

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Their Consolation.

Quartermaster General Edwin A. Taylor, of the United Sons of Confederate Veterans, told at a Memorial Day banquet in Memphis this story:

"A Southerner," he said, "sat in the lobby of a New York hotel, discussing certain campaigns with a Northerner.

"'Well,' the Northerner ended, with a laugh, 'well, we licked you, anyhow.'

"'Yes, you did,' the Southerner admitted, 'but, by thunder, it's plain, from the size of your pension list, that before we gave in we crippled every blessed one of you!'"

* * *

Mr. Edison's Message.

Thomas A. Edison was asked by the manager of an Electrical Exposition to send on a phonographic cylinder some of his ideas of electrical interest, to be read at a meeting of many people.

Mr. Edison replied in a few days and the cylinder was arranged and the audience told that it was to be especially favored by the personal message from Mr. Edison. The message was as follows:

"My Dear Sir: You have requested that I send a phonographic cylinder for your electrical meeting tonight upon which I shall say a few words of interest to your audience. I scarcely think the audience would take any interest in dry scientific subjects, so I will relate the story of a man. This man, who had chronic liver complaint, came from the West to the East. He searched all over the country for a mineral spring to cure his ailment, and finally he found a sulphur spring, the waters of which immediately cured him. He thereupon started a sanitarium, and many people from all over the world came and were cured. A few months ago the man died, and so powerful had been the action of the waters upon this man that they had to take his liver out and kill it with a club. Ever yours, Edison."

* * *

A Rough Estimate.

Charles M. Schwab tells a story about a type of man he often meets, the sort he calls the "other-people's-business-man."

"I overheard a conversation between one of these men and a large, prosperous-looking gentleman. It was in a smoking-car. They were sitting together.

"After a few puffs of his cigar the inquisitive man inquired of his neighbor, 'How many people work in your office?'

"The prosperous-looking gentleman slowly bit the end off a fresh cigar, and buried himself in his paper as he replied: 'At a rough estimate I should say about two-thirds of them.'"

* * *

The Proper Division.

"The late General Booth was a pronounced feminist," said a Cincinnati millionaire. "He dined with me on his last visit to America, and expressed the strongest feminist views.

"There was a little, busy chap present who insisted that the man should always be the head of the home, that it was the woman's place to obey and so forth; but General Booth silenced him rather neatly.

"'Why shouldn't the wife rule the home?' he said. 'It's her province. You are always insisting that the home is her province, and yet you won't let her rule her province. My advice to a man like you is simple and short. It is this—divide the home with your wife.'

"'How divide it?' the other asked.

"'Why,' said General Booth, 'give her the inside, and you take the outside.'"

* * *

A Clever Idea.

William Marconi, the famous electrical engineer, while recently discussing with a friend a new electrical idea, said: "It is certainly very clever. In fact it is a striking idea."

Then, with a reminiscent smile, he continued: "I have seen nothing like it since last fall. A young and enthusiastic young man showed me an engagement ring he was about to have patented.

"'But,' said I, as I critically examined the ordinary looking circle, 'what is there about this to warrant it being patentable?'

"The young man took the ring, held it proudly in his hand, as he straightened himself to his full height, and said: 'It's adjustable, sir.'"

Seizing the Opportunity.

Senator William E. Borah, of Idaho, tells a story of his native town where the Farmers' Alliance and its platform of principles are the chief topics of conversation.

A man of rather questionable character died in a remote part of the town and the nearest preacher was called to officiate at the funeral service. Not knowing the man, the preacher contented himself with a few general remarks on the solemn nature of the occasion, and then said he would be glad to have any of the company present say a word about the dead man, if they desired.

No one moved or spoke, and again the preacher extended an invitation to the company to offer remarks, but again his invitation met with silence. Finally an old farmer, who sat in the corner of the front room, rose and said: "If no one has any remarks to make about the deceased, I would like to make a few remarks about the Alliance's subtreasury plan."

* * *

An Unfilled Order.

J. Ogden Armour, defending packing-house methods at a luncheon in Chicago, said:

"We eat, thanks to the packers, more wholesome meat than we formerly did. My father used to tell a story about a farm boy who once called at a house and took an order for a leg of mutton. Then a day or two later the boy called again

"'You'll have to countermand that mutton order, ma'am,' he said.

"'Yes? Why so?'

"'The sheep's improvin',' said the boy

* * *

What He Would Be.

During a Republican campaign speech an orator became quite exasperated at the remarks of an old farmer, who kept insisting as he interrupted the speaker that he was a Democrat

"And why, sir, are you a Democrat, may I ask?" thundered the orator

"My father was a Democrat, as was his father before him," replied the farmer.

"Well, now," asked the orator, "suppose your father was a fool and your grandfather was a fool, what, under your line of argument, would you be?"

"I'd be a Republican," drawled the farmer.

* * *

A Wise Child.

Olie was recalcitrant and she was wise. Mamma had certain rules for punishing her irrepressible offspring and they were as unalterable as those of the Medes, of whom Olie had never heard, but whose rigor she understood.

So when Olie forgot mamma's commands one day and lingered too long at forbidden play, she felt the coming storm as she meandered home. Then came an inspiration.

"Aunt Annie, won't you spank me, please?" Olie fairly shouted at her auntie.

"Why, Olie, what do you mean? What have you done?"

Then came a tearful confession of wrongdoing and as a climax:

"Please, you spank me, Aunt Annie; mamma hurts more than you do."

It is only fair to state that Olie escaped altogether this time.

Spectacle Lenses Free

Now see here, friend! What's the use of your tearing and scratching your eyes out, reading this fine print with those old, dim and misty spectacles of yours, when you can just as well write and get a brand new pair of my wonderful "Perfect Vision" lenses absolutely free of charge.

You see, I have absolute confidence that just one try-out on your part will make you a permanent booster for my famous "Perfect Vision" spectacles, and I am therefore going to send every reader of this paper a pair of my latest improved lenses absolutely free of charge as an advertisement.

—These "Perfect Vision" lenses will enable you to read the very finest print in your bible even by the dim firelight—

—These "Perfect Vision" lenses will enable you to thread the smallest-eyed needle you can lay your hands on—

—These "Perfect Vision" lenses will enable you to shoot the smallest bird off the tallest tree top and to distinguish a horse from a cow at the greatest distance and as far as your eye can reach—

Now you certainly do want a pair of these wonderful "Perfect Vision" lenses of mine, and I surely want to give you a pair absolutely free—without ever asking you to pay me one penny for them, now and never.

So just write me your name, address and age next birthday on the below coupon and send it to me at once and I will immediately mail you a four-dollar cash certificate entitling you, absolutely free of charge, to a brand new pair of my wonderful "Perfect Vision" lenses, which will again enable you to enjoy your reading, sewing and hunting just as much as you ever did in your younger days.

Write Name, Address and Age Below.

DR. HAUX, The Spectacle Man,
ST. LOUIS, MO.

Please send me your free lens offer to fit my eyes. My age is..........

Name ....

Postoffice ....

R. R....... Box .... State .....

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An Aeroplane Elopement.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

expected that one who has gone hungry for kisses so long might refrain. Fortunately, however, there seemed to be no witness near by; at any rate no sudden rifle shot broke the silence of the night; though Polly looked anxiously toward the window as she pushed her incautious lover away.

"Oh, please go, Karl! Yes, I may agree to anything, if only you are well away from here before they come! It may be at any moment now, since father has been gone some time. Don't wait to say another word, but get beyond the door; and be very, very careful how you go along the road, for they may be coming, skulking along like shadows, or like men bent on an evil errand."

The young aviator himself realized the force of her words. His reason told him that the dangers were gathering thickly round him; and that a sudden change of base would be apt to prove of considerable benefit with regard to his health. He did not know that he felt in any particular need of an additional coat just then; and while in one sense he might be called a birdman, that was no reason why he should aspire to a feathery covering, especially when applied with sticky hot tar as a foundation.

Besides, he was curious to know whether the theory advanced by Polly could be the true one. Perhaps, after all, this Dolph may have come with some news concerning the safety of the secret still belonging to the old moonshiners; possibly, then, after a hasty consultation at the Grenfells cabin, the one with the whitewashed stable or lean-to just back of it, Luke might take it into his head to follow the hidden trail leading to his unlawful distillery, that had thus far never been seen by the eye of even the boldest revenue man. That was what Karl hoped might be the case. If only he could spy upon the veteran moonshiner, and learn where he had his secret holdout, he would feel that he had not undertaken this dangerous mission in vain.

So he immediately sprang to the door, and with one look back at the girl whom he loved so well, vanished into the night. He would never, so long as he lived, forget how she looked, standing there with both hands held out toward him, and her starry eyes expressing the agony of fear that filled her gentle soul concerning his safety. Once outside, Karl Bennings became the cool, resolute revenue man. He had good reason to believe that this was destined to be the most important night in his entire career; and that before morning had come he would have won a dazzling success, or perhaps lost everything worth having, even to life itself.

The moon was up and shining, just above the treetops to the east. He lost no time in plunging into the shadows, where the keenest hostile eye might have more or less difficulty in picking him out.

Quite naturally, too, he had drawn the reliable little automatic pistol which he carried as a life preserver. While a rifle, such as all these men of the mountains "toted," might prove the more serviceable weapon at a distance, given this modern quick-shooting firearm, and the revenue officer had little fears about being able to hold his own against several foes.

But all seemed quiet. If, as Polly seemed to fear, Jack Lawson and some of his cronies were on the way to the Johnson cabin, bent upon having some fun with the handsome flying-machine man who had dropped down among them, and annoyed the said Jack by the way he seemed to watch Luke's girl out of the corners of his eyes, they had not yet arrived. Perhaps they may have halted on the road in order to disguise themselves in such fashion that old Luke might never guess just who they were. If this were so, it pleased Karl to believe that everything was working in his interest; and that the signs were right for a successful outcome to his adventure.

He knew that to keep along the road until he came to the Grenfells cabin would mean constant risk; since possibly he might meet the coming band of mountain White Caps; but while he avoided the open as much as he could, he felt that he could not accept the chances of becoming bewildered in the maze of the rough country, and losing his way.

Once he thought he heard low voices, but though he crouched down to wait for the enemy to pass by, no one appeared. No further sounds of a suspicious nature reached his ears; and Karl found reason to believe that if Jack Lawson and his followers were even then on their way to the Johnson cabin, they must have given the road a wide berth, for some reason or other.

Then, finally, he drew near the cabin that had the whitewashed lean-to in the rear. Whenever he had passed other houses where lights were to be seen, and he heard the voices of women and children, Karl had made a little detour, so as to avoid arousing the suspicions of the various dogs belonging to the several families.

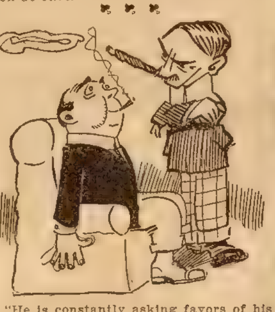
One thing he could not but note, and this was the significant fact that while he had seen a score or two of persons during his passage over that quarter of a mile, not a single man had come under his observation.

"That looks as though something must be in the wind," he said to himself, "since these fellows have all the liquor they want at home in the jug, and there is no corner saloon for them to congregate at. Some of them may be at Grenfells' talking over the rumor that there is a spy in the mountains again; but the younger element must be with Jack, brimming over with a desire to have some fun with the unlucky aviator who fell into their midst."

And when he presently sighted the log cabin, back of which he could plainly see the white lean-to mentioned by Polly, the revenue man discovered signs of commotion, such as plainly announced something out of the customary taking place. A group of men stood by the door, evidently debating something that possessed vital interest for each and every member of the conference; and from the way in which guns were forcibly shaken at times, it was easy to see that the news they discussed had aroused their passions to the utmost.

This extremely interesting story will be concluded in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once.

* * *



"He is constantly asking favors of his friends."

"Is, eh?"

"Yes; he has asked me ten times for $5 that I owe him."

* * *

Turning the Tables.

The bridegroom and his bride were starting on their honeymoon. Just as they had taken their seats in the train one of the bridegroom's chums came hastily along to bid good-by.

As the young husband extended his hand the friend snapped a handcuff on his wrist. The bridegroom had been expecting a trick of some kind, and before the practical joker could play a similar trick on the bride he found the other handcuff snapped round his own wrist. He was chained to the happy bridegroom himself.

"That's a good one against me, Harry," he said with a sickly smile, "but I shall have to ask you to come to the door with me and get the key for these things. A man on the platform has it."

Just then the guard's whistle sounded and the train started off. Later, the guard, with the aid of a file, succeeded in separating the prisoners.

The joker meanwhile had to pay full fare to the next stop, fifty miles up the road, and return.

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We will send you one full quart bottle of Fels 3-Star Whiskey absolutely free, along with your first order for 8 full quart bottles of Fels 3-Star Whiskey for $5.45 and we pay express charges. After you receive the 9 full quart bottles, open one of them, test it anyway you like and if not entirely satisfactory, you have the privilege of returning to us the remaining 8 bottles and the one extra bottle you may keep free and we will immediately return your $5.45. Or send us $2.35 for four full quart bottles of Fels 3-Star Whiskey, express prepaid, and we will include one test bottle free. Test the free bottle and if not absolutely satisfactory and the best whiskey you ever tasted at any price, just return to us the 4 bottles and keep the free bottle and we will refund your $2.35 without question or argument. With each order we give free, valuable certificates, Gold Tipped Whiskey Glass and Corkscrew. Remember, **we pay the express charges**; look close before you permit some of the low prices of Mail Order Houses to get your order and make you pay the express charges.

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Kitty and the Cowboys.

(Continued from page nine.)

the door and baited the rest of the bunch till there wa'n't no one left to tantalize. Then the door was shut for keeps and there was doin's a-plenty for a few minits, you can take it from me, and I was sure there.

When Kitty called to me and headed off the foreman, and I hid a-waitin' for Shad to come in, was the time the trap was ready and waitin' to be sprung on the first sucker that showed his face—and it was Mr. Smarty sure enough that took the first fall.

When Shad slammed the door shut, he come a-stormin' over to Kitty, and you'd 'a' thought he was a-goin' to eat her in one endurin' mouthful. He was sure in some earnest and Kitty jumps up from her rockin' chair and backs away toward the cookroom door.

That didn't faze Shad, none, who was persistent, and he puts his arm around Kitty a-huggin' her and a-talkin' baby talk to her till I was fit to bust. And when he asks her to marry him, and Kitty, shy but [illegible] low and softlike, he takes his big nugget ring off his finger and puts it on Kitty's fat one, and kisses her and says now they's engaged, and him not bein' satisfied he takes his [illegible] silk handkerchief offen his neck and ties it round Kitty's—and just then she puts her arms around his neck and I and the cook hog tie and gag him so's he can't wiggle. Then we clean his pockets of coin, which yesterday bein' payday it meant something.

Kitty was the only one in on the deal that he saw, for we had it fixed so's she would back him up to the other door, and holdin' him tight, with her arms around him, we could finish him by carryin' him through the door into the cookroom. But it certain was no cinch to keep him from bellerin' the news to the bunch, more especial when he felt his guns peeled offen him.

Believe me he did squirm and try to get the gag loose, but we soon got him laid away out of sight with a rag wound around his head to keep him from seein' as he lay on the floor, a-waitin' company which come right soon, now that the procession had started. Every feller was fixed up the same way, we playin' no favorites, and when the last one of 'em was a-layin' on the floor of the cookroom, you couldn't walk only by steppin' over 'em, they lay so close and plenty.

Kitty hides the money where she can guard it good and safe, and after I makes a couple of trips to the bunk house carryin' stuff to decorate with, Kitty trusses me up like the rest, after I had sent the cook away to look after the horses. Then she sneaks out carryin' the balance of the guns and truck which the bunch had persisted on showerin' on her, beggin' her to please take it offen 'em.

About an hour later the cook, actin' accordin' to instructions, come a-singin' around the side of the house, and openin' the back door, falls flat as he stumbles over the fellers that's layin' nearest.

Fatty an the cook said it was only an hour, but it seemed like a week before we was all loose, and then there was some doin's. Cooky untied me first, and after rubbin' my wrists till they got to actin' natural, we soon freed the bunch.

They was just naturally done up and acted as if they hadn't come to, but when they did and got the use of their faculties, there was some talkin'. I told 'em they'd set the buildin' afire if they didn't stop usin' langwidge, but that only made 'em madder, and they started out to find the gang that had held 'em up. But when they stood outside and saw how every duffer among them had been skinned to the limit, they roared and hollered and whooped.

Every man reached for his gun in a natural kinda way to give vent to his smotherin' feelin's, and the feel of the empty leather brought him back to the place where he started from, and that was some ugly. They was sure ready for any devilish thing that come into their heads, and I was a-feelin' some onsettled in my mind as to what doin's was to be Fatty's share. Then one or two started to the corral to see if they had taken the horses, and come runnin' back thankin' Gawd they was left anyway.

Then they all started for the bunk-house—Shad bein' the first to go in. Red was close behind him and struck a match just as he stepped in the door, and one of the tin lamps in the middle of the room was soon goin' good and light. [illegible] I wouldn't have [illegible] that for a [illegible] or two for [illegible]. As the [illegible] made the bunk-[illegible] light [illegible] every feller turn [illegible] to look to some other feller, and then back to the picture that first paralyzed 'em.

There on Fatty's bunk was Kitty, layin' sound asleep, one hand a-restin' [illegible] cozy under her fat cheek, while [illegible] eyes was shut that sweet and innocent, it struck every man just like that.

Then with a wild yell they set up a call to Kitty to give up their money and guns. As they said that about shootin' irons, one of the bunch pointed to the rope a-stretchin' across one side of the room, and turnin' to look, the bunch shut up quick and sure. Hangin' side [illegible] each was the guns of the whole outfit, with bright neck-handkerchiefs a-scattered promiscuous-like through them, makin' a showin' that was like Fourth of July at Lone Dog. Every color was there, and not a man but what had give his up, a-urgin' and a-coaxin' Kitty to take it.

Kitty never let on that they was disturbin' her a tall, and just slept away peaceful as a little baby. All in a holy second she sets up in the bunk, and turns and looks at 'em as they stood lookin' like a bunch of sheared sheep and just about as frisky, and then she begins laffin' and rolls out of bed, a-takin off that pritty flowered dress and talkin' in langwidge plumb shockin'.

Not a word come from the bunch which stood a-starin' as if their eyes would bust out of their faces, but when the gorgeous waist was pulled off and just plain shirt sleeves showed under it, and Fatty pushed back his pritty curls and showed the same fat face they was sure some acquainted with, the whoops them fellers let out as they swarmed on Fatty was a sin.

But Fatty just kept a-castin' off duds that was Kitty's till he reached for his old pants he'd wore before he'd sorta been born again as Kitty, and set on the side of the bunk and talked. And such talk as he give 'em—baby talk, and cooin', and soft, and all kinds, till the bunch held up their hands and told him it was quits for them. But for Fatty it was nary quits then or any time afterwards. He had 'em on the run, and he sure did put 'em through their paces for fair.

Then, when they all owned up they was whipped to a frazzle, they came round beggin' for their money, and for all the answer he made 'em he throwed 'em the bustle that had helped make Kitty. Shad caught it on the fly, as it sailed through the room. As he turned it inside out all the money fell out.

When Fatty was settin' at the table a-eatin' his supper he takes out Shad's big nugget ring and puts it on his fat finger and raises his saucer to drink, twiddlin' his little finger in as sassy a style as any of the four hundred could. Shad had to plumb pry the ring loose from Fatty, and you never could ketch Shad a-showin' off with it after that. He was cured, and he stayed cured for keeps.

If the bunch ever tried to put something over on Fatty, all he had to do was to pull his mustaches and twiddle his little finger and talk some goo-goo words and baby cooin', and the bunch would plumb lay down. They was bridle broke.

* * *

Bundles for the Bride.

A West Side woman in New York, gives this reason for carrying home her own parcels:

"There is a prospective bride in our boarding house," she said. "Everything in the dry goods line is grist to the mill of the woman about to be married. Other women who have the misfortune to live in the same house shop under difficulties. The only way they can insure the enjoyment of their own purchases is to carry them home.

"If the things are delivered the bride snaps them up. Possibly she has no real shoplifting propensities, but circumstances combine to make her a thief. Servants bring to her room all parcels of whatever size and shape that come to the front door. So many of the things do belong to her that to read the label or listen to what the delivery boy says is considered superfluous exertion. And the bride is equally disdainful of a preliminary examination. Egotistically she rips off wrappers and digs into contents.

"Yesterday I heard her raising the roof because a certain shop had sent her six pairs of black silk stockings instead of the pink, blue and tan she had ordered. After she had sent the stockings back and had the money refunded I discovered the stockings were mine. I cannot afford to contribute these parcels to the bride's wardrobe, so I am carrying them home."

* * *

Over That Now.

"Is their honeymoon over?"

"I guess so. She's stopped sitting up for him when he's out late nights."

CATARRH TRUTH

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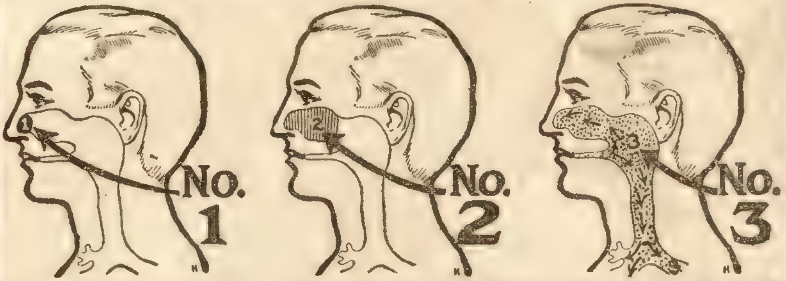

These three pictures show the air passages of the head, nose and throat. Here catarrh thrives and grows. The three pictures show the parts which various catarrh treatments will reach.

No. 1—The little black spot in the picture above shows the very small part of the disease that can be reached by balms, salves, ointments, pastes, creams or similar treatments.

Such remedies reach only a tiny part, and even if these treatments kill the germs, they only stop the trouble on a little part of the diseased surface.

No. 2—Shows where sprays, douches, atomizers, snuffs and such remedies reach. Like No. 1—even if these treatments kill the germs they can only reach a fraction of the disease and you can't expect all cure by curing only a small part of the disease. To reach all the catarrh area you must have a treatment that reaches all the air passages as shown in No. 3.

No. 3—Dr. Blosser's Catarrh Remedy is a medicated smoke and it reaches every corner and nook of the air passages in the nose, throat, neck and lungs.

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The Fortunes of War

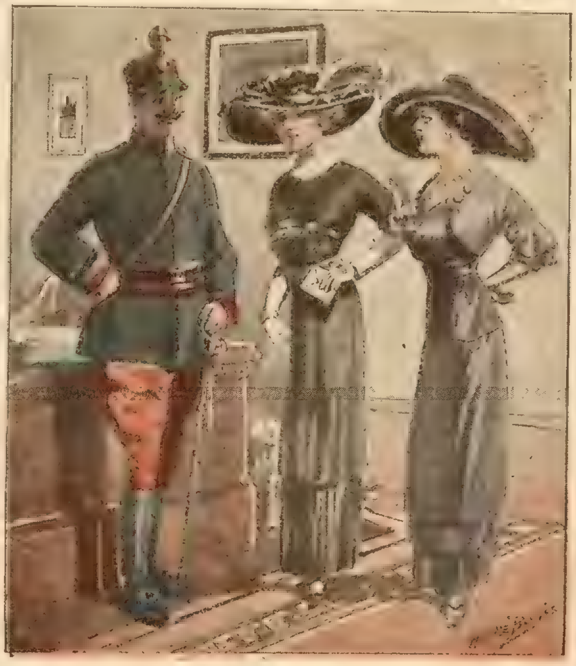
By JAMES C. THRELFALL

JUAN MORENO, Captain of the Orozco garrison at Sierra [illegible], otherwise known to friend and foe alike as the "Butcher" sat eating his breakfast. Moreno was feeling in very good spirits, nothwithstanding the warning that had just come to him early that morning that the Maderists would overpower and take possession of his bailiwick within twenty-four hours.

He, the "Butcher," who had lorded it over the countryside for six months with his gang of [illegible] cutthroats, would, by the process of events of those same twenty-four hours be either a fugitive from, or a sacrifice to Justice.

The reason of the Captain's good spirits was to be found in this same forewarning [illegible] and the fact that as a result of six months' exercise of the gentle arts of pillage, arson, and murder he had accumulated fifty thousand dollars. The fifty thousand dollars had been [illegible] changed as fast as accumulated into good American bank-notes, and was now sewed securely inside the lining of a certain gray traveling dress of his wife's.

Even as the "Butcher" ate there was a busy bustling about in the next room which he knew to be the Senora Moreno, already arrayed in the same gray dress, adding the finishing touches to her toilet preparatory to leaving on the morning train for Juarez.



The letters were ready.

She was to cross the border there, and Juan was to follow her twelve hours afterward to the American side, where revolutions disturb not and revolutionists [illegible] to [illegible]. And so, as he sat at the table and topped off his meal with [illegible] Mexican wine, Moreno was well satisfied with himself, and stroked his long drooping moustachios as much as to say, "Am I not a clever fellow to have accomplished so much in so short a time?"

A little ragged Mexican servant-boy entered the room.

"A lady to see your excellency," he said.

"Let her be admitted," replied Moreno.

The lady was an American. She was young and pretty, and had been, as she told the commandant, widowed by a prowling band of brigands. She wondered if it would be trespassing too much on his captainship's kindness to ask him for a [illegible] letter of introduction to the commandant at Juarez. She would be glad to pay the Captain for the service.

The Captain studied her for a moment in silence. He was of an ingenious nature, was Juan Moreno, given to the following of devious paths oftentimes when the more direct path would have proved the more profitable.

He was given to playing with those in his power as a cat does with a mouse, and ordinarily he would have dangled hopes of escape before the widow until such time as would have sufficed to entice from her such available capital as she possessed, after which she would have been led out and shot as a suspected enemy to the Orozco cause.

But it happened there was reason for following a different course at the present time. His wife had to make the trip to Juarez; alone unless some companion was secured for her. He would let the widow keep her company. In the end he could have the captain at Juarez carry out the execution and [illegible] part of the proceeds for him, [illegible] were customary among fellow-officials.

The woman was looking at him questioningly and not altogether unfearfully for his answer.

"I should be pleased to accommodate the madame," Moreno said, suavely, "and will ask but the one favor of you."

"And that is?" she inquired, hope dawning in her eyes.

"That you will act as traveling companion to my wife, who happens to be going to the same place."

The woman accepted the offer with profuse thanks. The Captain rang for his wife. The Senora Morena was a tall woman, not at all a pleasant woman to look at. Men said she was more cruel even in her instincts than her husband. She was dressed in a gray traveling suit. She did have a figure! None could deny her that.

"Mrs. Ainsworth, my dear," said Moreno in introduction, "who is to accompany you to El Paso. He seated himself at the table he had just quitted, and tore off a couple of sheets of paper from a convenient pad.

"I'll fix you up with a couple of notes to the captain at Juarez. His name is Navarro, and though I have never met him, I can vouch for your finding him willing to extend every courtesy in his power."

The first note the "Butcher" indited read:

"To the Hon. Captain of the Garrison at Juarez: This note will introduce you to the bearer, my wife, who is on her way to El Paso for the purpose of securing arms and ammunition for the furtherance of The Cause. With best wishes for yourself.

"Yours sincerely,
"JUAN MORENO."

The second note was equally explicit.

"To the Hon. Captain of the Garrison at Juarez: This note will introduce you to Mrs. Ainsworth, a woman spy of Madero's who has placed herself brazenly in our power. You will confer a favor on me if, after searching her for such funds as I believe to be concealed about her person and turning them over to my wife, you will execute her as an enemy to the republic. Sincerely,
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Moreno folded the notes, reached in a drawer for a couple of envelopes, taking occasion to give his wife a knowing wink as he did so. The letters were ready. Were the ladies ready, he inquired? They were.

The ragged serving-boy announced the arrival of the carriage which had been ordered for the senora, and the two women rose. Moreno shook hands politely with the Americano and gave his wife a chaste salute on the right cheek. She looked very capable in her gray traveling-dress. Also he was forced to admit, very tigerish. The senora was not always the easiest wife to get along with in the world. But she certainly knew how to extract the coin from prisoners.

"See you tomorrow!" the senora whispered.

"Let us hope so," he replied.

* * * * *

Having embarked our ladies safely on their journey, let us move the hand of time forward twelve hours on the dial and start Moreno on the same itinerary. He made no use of carriage or outward show of pomp, did the Captain. He stole to the station by the more secluded routes, and when he boarded the train it was by swinging aboard the end of the coach from the side opposite the station-house.

It was a long tedious ride to Juarez. The little coach banged and rattled as it swung from one side to the other of the demoralized roadbed. It seemed that at any moment it might leave the track altogether. There was the danger constantly before the runaway revolutionist of the train's being sidetracked or stopped and overhauled by some prowling band of brigands. There were but four occupants of the coach, and the others were as noncommunicative as was Moreno.

The day was just breaking in the east when the train rolled slowly into Juarez. The officer at the station let the passengers pass without examination. The "Butcher" proceeded to a restaurant to refresh the inner man and to kill the time that might elapse before Navarro would be likely to be at his office.

Promptly at eight he paid for the miserable meal he had consumed and set out for the barracks. He was informed that the commandant was in his office and would be glad to see him.

"Ah, worthy Captain," said Navarro, rising, "it gives me great pleasure to meet you."

"It is I who am favored," said Moreno, politely. "My wife passed through all right did she?"

"She did. Also the other lady."

Moreno showed his cruel teeth in a smile. "Much of a sum about her?"

"I should say so," replied Navarro. "A fortunate thing for you and the cause that I am an honest man. Not many would have turned over the entire sum as I did. Fifty thousand dollars there was, and all in American bank-notes."

A singular coincidence, mused Moreno, and yet a happy one for him at any rate. The woman must have been a spy of some sort, else whence so much cash? A hundred thousand dollars altogether now. Surely the gods had been good to him.

"A very charming lady, your wife, Senor Moreno," continued the host. "But the other lady. She fought like a wild beast when she learned of our intentions."

"Quite to be expected."

"Yes. Life is dear to all of us. It seemed sad that a lady, though, such as she, should have lied so sturdily in the face of death?"

"Lied?"

"Yes, lied. Lied and cursed and swore. It was pitiful, I assure you to behold. Gave me quite a turn, though of course I have had a good deal of experience in such matters. Claimed by all that was holy that she was your wife, and the other woman was the one meant for execution."

Moreno was interested. He sprang from his chair. Could there have been a mistake after all?

"But we dragged her out at sunrise this morning just the same. She claimed the notes you wrote were shuffled somehow in the sealing after they were written. But of course it was merely a ruse on her part to gain a few more hours of life. Said if we waited until eight o'clock you would be here and could explain everything. But old man don't look so woebegone. I want you to meet my wife. She was quite impressed with the Senora Moreno."

He rang and a woman of middle age entered. Moreno stared woodenly at the woman. No need to longer doubt the trick that Fate had played with him. It was the dress his wife had worn the morning before in which Madame Navarro was arrayed.

"I don't wonder at your staring at the gown, Captain," the lady said as she took his hand. "It was of such good material we couldn't bear to see it wasted in the grave of a spy. Isn't it a perfect fit?"

It was. The Captain nodded. He sat down in a convenient chair, for he was feeling faint. He clinched his fists at his side. When he opened them there was a thin streak of blood in each of the palms.

"Wasn't it odd?" Madame Navarro continued, "that the woman should have gone to her grave with the lie on her lips that she was your wife."

He nodded. No need to tell them of the mistake or how it happened. The "Butcher" was not given to crying over spilt milk. His wife was gone. Well, wives are easily gotten when one has a long black mustache and understands women. The fifty thousand dollars was not so easily replaced.

Much as the developments of the last five minutes had changed his worldly prospects, Moreno had still his personal freedom. He must be going. He would be a deal safer on the American side of the line than on his native soil.

Even as he rose from his chair, there was a knock at the door and a messenger was admitted.

"A telegram for your excellency," he said.

Navarro opened it, and handed it silently to the "Butcher." It read:

"You are hereby instructed to intercept and shoot as a deserter on sight one Juan Moreno.

"(Signed) PASCUAL OROZCO JR."

* * *

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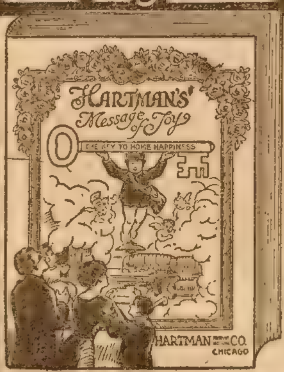

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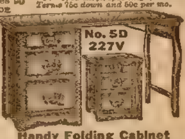

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Our Boys' Corner

Peter, the Boy Patriot

Or, OUTWITTING CORNWALLIS

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 44, November 2. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TABLES TURNED.

LORD CORNWALLIS was not done with Peter Halket, the young patriot. Although he had set him free after his arrest by the soldiers he resolved to punish him later on. Peter himself feared this, but the fear did not dampen his patriotism. He had not given over the plan to rescue the American prisoners of war confined on board the Charon, which lay at anchor in the broad channel of the river and in full view from the British camp at Yorktown. That it would be a dangerous undertaking he well knew, and what made it more hazardous, was the fact that some one had betrayed him to Cornwallis. Old Martin Bolt, the Tory, was his bitter enemy, and the boy knew that he would relax none of his vigilance nor be satisfied till he had defeated his purpose.

Having seen Gideon Mosket safe in the hands of the Americans, who would see that his spying expeditions were curtailed, Peter slipped back to his home [illegible]

His home was situated on high ground, and from the window of his room he could see the Charon flying the royal ensign. Beyond the warship was Gloucester Point, where Colonel Tarleton was encamped with his famous Legion. Tarleton came often to Yorktown to consult with his chief commander, and Peter had often caught sight of the two on the rocks looking over the town and out upon the American camps which lay beyond.

It was early the next morning that a dull boom roused Peter, and he was at the window. Washington had opened fire on Yorktown. In a moment, as it seemed, the street became alive with British soldiers. It was expected that the Americans would assault the ramparts, and the red-coated regiments were being hurried to certain places. Peter watched them a while with great curiosity.

Presently he caught sight of Nelly Brewster running toward the house, and then he heard her excited voice in the room beneath. He dressed and hurried down.

"They are going to fight, Peter!' the girl exclaimed, at sight of him.

"Not just yet, I think," was the reply. "I dare say Washington is only sending Lord Cornwallis his compliments in the shape of a few cannon balls."

"Yes," persisted Nelly, "it is to be a battle. I heard Martin Bolt declare that it will be an engagement."

"If it is a battle you may be sure he will keep out of harm's way. Old Martin isn't going to have his hide perforated by American balls. He is the wretch who had me summoned before Cornwallis, but I am at a loss to know who betrayed me to Martin."

The cannonading did not last long and the regiments soon came marching back.

"Look yonder, Peter!" suddenly exclaimed Nelly. "If I mistake not, here comes Gideon Mosket with some soldiers."

Peter started and his face went pale. What, had the spy escaped from Lafayette's camp and turned up in Yorktown? The boy craned his neck forward and did not speak.

The guard of six men approached the house, and to his alarm, the young Rebel beheld Gideon Mosket at their head.

"As I live it is Gideon!" he cried, stepping back. "They are coming here?"

"But what for, Peter?" asked his mother.

"I can't explain just now. They want me."

In another moment the redcoats were at the door, and a heavy rap sounded throughout the house. Mrs. Halket opened it and faced the men.

"That's the boy we want," rang out the harsh voice of Gideon Mosket, as a quivering finger covered the speechless Peter. "That is the young Rebel who came near to being my everlasting undoing."

Peter remained a statue in the middle of the room.

"You are under arrest," said one of the soldiers, as his hand fell upon Peter's arm. "You are wanted at the General's headquarters."

"That's what he is," grinned the fiddling spy. "I guess the tables have been turned sooner than you expected, eh, Peter?"

"Well, it isn't my fault."

"Of course it isn't," returned Gideon, "I managed to escape from the Rebel camp, and here I am, right side up and worth a thousand dead men. I have no doubt the Rebels expected to make short work of me, but they caught an old fox when they caught Gideon Mosket. So here I am. Take him away, men. You've got the right boy."

The spy had scarcely ceased when he noticed Nelly who stood half hidden by the figure of Peter's mother.

"I declare, here's my pretty bird!" he cried, advancing. "You don't seem to enjoy this, Miss Nelly?'

"You are right, Gideon Mosket. I do not enjoy the arrest of Peter. If he had anything to do with your arrest, I glory in it, and am sorry you slipped the noose."

"Have a care!" was the reply, couched in no gentle terms. "I'm on my own stamping ground once more, and my word is law in Yorktown."

"And a merciless law it is, no doubt. You are one of those mean Americans who have turned agains their country, but some day, Gideon Mosket, you'll get your just dues, and then Liberty will rejoice."

"Just listen to the Rebel chit!" cried Gideon, coloring, as he turned to the detachment. "I ought to kiss her for her words just because she hates me."

"If you dare!' exclaimed Nelly.

Gideon determined to carry out his threat, and springing forward, he was in the act of seizing the girl, when Peter, breaking from the grasp of the British sergeant, dealt him a blow in the face which sent him spinning across the room.

"Just look at that insult!" the spy shouted, as he spluttered to his feet. "Give me your musket, guard, and I'll save General Cornwallis a lot of trouble."

"Let him have the gun," Peter said to the redcoat. "Let the coward try his hand with me. I fear no such traitors."

But the soldier resisted Gideon's efforts to get possession of the weapon, and Gideon was not desirious of facing the stalwart young Rebel open-handed.

"They'll hang you before night," he hissed, shaking his fist in Peter's face. "You'll dangle from a pole before you're two hours older!" and with this he fell back while the guard again seized the boy.

Once more through the streets of Yorktown went Peter surrounded by British bayonets, but he held his head high and looked about him like one who has no fear. Gideon tramped alongside the guard, muttering maledictions on his head and all the time covering him with vengeful looks.

It was quite early, but Lord Cornwallis was awake, and presently, for the second time, Peter stood erect in his presence.

"Back again?" said the General, as his gaze fell upon the young patriot. "It hasn't been long since you were here."

Peter smiled but did not reply.

"So you've been getting my friend Gideon into trouble?" continued Cornwallis. "What have you to say in your defense?"

"I don't think I need to say anything," responded Peter. "I found Gideon Mosket spying in the American camp, and it was a duty I owed to the cause of liberty to hand him over to officers there."

"Which in my opinion stamps you an unmitigated young Rebel," snapped Cornwallis.

"That's what he is, your excellency," put in Gideon. "Not only that, but he dealt me a blow with a cudgel last night that nearly cracked my head. If it hadn't been for my hat, I wouldn't be here doing the King a service. I saw all the stars in the firmament when he struck me."

Lord Cornwallis silenced the ranter with a severe look, and just then the door opened and the form of Martin Bolt became visible.

"Ha! I see you've trapped the young fox!" he cried, taking in the scene at a glance. "Young snakes have poison as well as older ones."

"You're right, Master Bolt," Gideon cried. "This young serpent served me a scurvy trick, and——"

"Be still," commanded Cornwallis. "I am capable of taking care of Rebels."

"Now, my young fellow," he turned to

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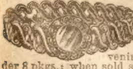

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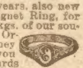

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"He's not the only offender, your excellency," said Martin. "There are his two companions who are real mischief makers."

"We'll take care of them later on," replied Cornwallis, with severity. "Take him away."

"To the Charon, your excellency?" asked the big sergeant.

"To the vessel."

Peter was placed between the redcoated files and hustled out of the room.

"You'll have to guard him well," advised Martin Bolt. "He is one of the sleekest young foxes I ever heard of. What is more, he is so full of Rebel plans that it will take sharp eyes to keep him safe on board the warship."

"Just as if he will be capable of giving us trouble while there," Cornwallis returned. "He's safe till the end of the war, Friend Martin. I'll be responsible for his safe-keeping."

With this Cornwallis by a gesture told the two Tories that he desired to be left alone, and presently Martin and Gideon stood in the street.

"If he should get away he might give us trouble," Martin Bolt suggested.

"But he can't," put in Gideon. "They'll put him in irons, no doubt, and watch him like a hawk. I wish they had hanged him at once."

At that instant a boom was heard in the nearest American works, and a cannon ball shattered a chimney, scattering the bricks about the two Tories.

"I don't want to stop a thing like that," exclaimed Martin Bolt, as he took to his heels, and down the street flew the gallant couple, the one trying his best to outdo the other.

CHAPTER V.

A SPY'S DISCOMFITURE.

Peter, the young patriot, found himself on board the warship Charon in a condition not looked for. He was a prisoner to be watched like a hawk by a commander intent on obeying his orders to the letter. He was received by the Charon's captain who looked him over, and then ordered him below under guard.

The ardent boy had no reason to believe that he would be allowed any privileges, for he had fallen into the hands of the enemy and would be restrained from carrying out his design to release the American officers confined on the vessel.

It was a long day for him. The stately ship rode at anchor in the middle of the river, but Peter could see the steeples of Yorktown and the tents of Tarleton's Legion from a small window in his prison. Now and then came to his ear the roar of Washington's cannon as they saluted Cornwallis, and whenever the great guns spat out their iron there was a tramping overhead, for the men of the Charon were anxious to note the effects of the bombardment.

The shades of night were falling over the water when his prison door opened and Peter was hurried up on deck. There he came face to face with a handsome officer, clad in the brilliant uniform of the Royal Dragons. He knew at once that it was Tarleton himself.

"This is the boy, Colonel," said the captain of the Charon as he waved his hand toward Peter. "You see he is a smart-looking lad."

Tarleton looked the young captive over from head to foot.

"It's a pity," said he, in mock sympathy, "that boys must play a part against the King."

"Some of these young Rebels are as dangerous as their elders," replied the Captain.

"I do not doubt it, sir. I've seen them in the Carolinas, and by my life! they gave me a great deal of trouble there."

"I will see that this one does nothing of the kind," returned the sailor, with a smile. "He's safe here, Colonel, and I shall carry out Lord Cornwallis's commands to the very letter."

Tarleton turned to Peter once more.

"I suppose you're grounded in your so-called patriotism?" said he, a haughty smile playing with his lips.

"If you mean that I will not renounce my love of liberty, you are right, sir," responded the boy.

"You look brave enough to take service under the royal banner."

"Which I will never do."

"But what will you do when we have subjugated all the Rebels?"

"When that day comes, sir, I will take up arms for King George, but that day will never dawn in North America."

"How?" laughed Tarleton.

"Why, sir, we have already destroyed all your armies but one," returned Peter, "and that one is now cooped up in Yorktown and will soon yield to General Washington and his men."

"Tut, tut!" cried the officer. "Before many days we will have the Rebel Washington in irons."

"We will wait and see, sir. We have captured Burgoyne and rid the South of the redcoats, and erelong there will be but one flag in this country."

The British officer turned sharply on his heel, saying to the captain of the Charon:

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"You want to watch that young Rebel. He is as full of tricks as a monkey. I don't like Rebels," and with this he strode haughtily away.

Peter was remanded to his room, where he could lean against the narrow ledge of his lookout and reflect upon his sudden change of fortunes.

Meanwhile different scenes were taking place in Yorktown. Nelly Brewster was sewing in the little room of her home, when the door suddenly opened and the figure of Gideon Mosket, the spy, blocked the entrance. A look of deep aversion leaped up in the girl's eyes, and laying her work aside she gazed at the intruder in no pleasant mood. Gideon advanced and took a seat near her.

"You are a real Dorcas," said he, as he feasted his eyes upon her pretty face. "You will make some one an excellent wife one of these days."

A flush overspread Nelly's face, but she did not reply.

"They've got one young Rebel where the dogs won't bay at him," continued Gideon.

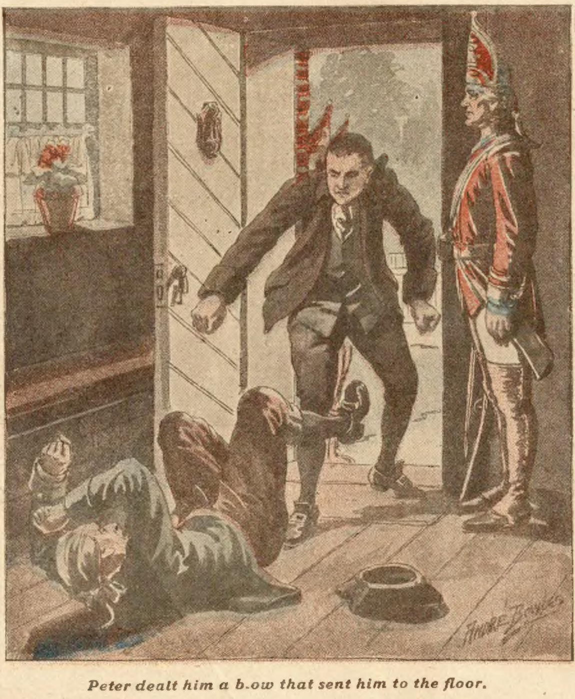
"Do you mean Peter?"

"Yes, the young Rebel who nearly thrust my neck into the halter."

"I am aware that he has been arrested, and is now confined in the Charon, which is anchored in the stream."

"The proper place for an audacious young lark like him. It will be many a long day before he again sets foot on his native heath."

"And all through your conniving, I hear," exclaimed Nelly, in rising tones.



Peter dealt him a blow that sent him to the floor.

"I did inform on him, that's a fact," smiled the spy. "It was tit for tat, you see."

"It was no more than one could expect of Gideon Mosket," returned the patriot girl.

"You stand by Peter, then?"

"Why should I not? Is he not a patriot, and does he not hate the King as I do?"

Gideon drew back and tapped the floor with his foot.

"I think I could tame you," said he, suddenly. "What you need is a master, my young lady."

Seeing the look which accompanied these words, Nelly rose from her chair and quietly laid her work on the table.

"You are not welcome in this house, Gideon Mosket," said she, speaking coolly. "I did not invite you here, as you very well know."

"I often go where I am not invited," was the retort. "I don't see why Gideon Mosket should not have freedom in Yorktown, especially since it is under the King's banner."

Without replying to these words Nelly crossed the room and suddenly opened the door. "You will please me very much," said she, "if you will take your presence elsewhere."

Gideon kept his seat and grinned.

"Very well, if you will not go, you shall keep company with yourself," continued the girl. "I care not to listen to one who is a spy in the pay of the great oppressor across the sea."

"Not so fast!" almost roared Gideon, as Nelly turned away. "I prefer to have company. You will remain."

The last words, in the nature of a stern command, drove every vestige of color from Nelly Brewster's cheeks. Instead of resuming her seat she picked up the old-fashioned lamp which illuminated the room and looked at her visitor.

"You will remain if you wish to, but it shall be in the dark," she cried. "I have no desire to see the face of one who has betrayed Peter Halket."

Irritated to desperation by her coolness, the Tory sprang to his feet and his finger covered the girl.

"Set the light down!" he demanded. "I am master here, though it be in your own house. I know you are alone tonight——"

"But I am not helpless, villain," was the interruption. "I will not remain."

She caught the vindictive flash that blazed up in his eyes, but it did not deter her.

He took a hasty step forward, and the lamp was carried above her head by a sudden movement.

"Have a care, Gideon Mosket," she exclaimed. "You may have more light than you desire if you persist in your advances."

"Ha! ha!" he laughed with derision. "I have called to ask you to become Mrs. Mosket, the wife of one who after the war will receive a high position in the King's service."

"And you want my answer, I suppose?"

"I shall not leave without it."

"Then here it is," and the lamp shot straight toward the spy and landed full in his face, scattering its grease all over his sleek garments and rendering him the most ludicrous object ever seen in Yorktown.

Fortunately for Gideon and the house as well, the contents of the lamp did not ignite, but the wick which spluttered on the floor revealed everything, including the triumphant features of the fair Rebel.

Gideon's anger grew into a storm. He stamped in his rage while he attempted to clear his face of the obnoxious dose, but the more he worked the worse he looked. Nelly could not suppress a smile.

"Good night, Gideon," she said, in subdued merriment. "Now, if you only had a wife you would soon be free from the grease. I wish you good luck in getting rid of it."

"I'll pay you for this treatment," he gasped. "I'll see that when you are Mistress Mosket you will not throw lamps with impunity."

"We will wait till that day comes," replied Nelly. "Never mind about the floor, Gideon. I'll clean it up," and with this she opened a door which led into another room and whisked herself out of sight.

She heard Gideon storming in the dark, his voice rising in all manner of imprecations, and at last dying away in a volley of threatening words. Presently she stole to the window and parted the curtains. A man stepped from the house and glared back at it, while he shook his fist in a last spasm of madness.

"I'll tame her," he muttered to himself. "I'll break the rebellious spirit of this young Rebel queen. If I can only get home without being seen in this spoiled garb I will be very thankful," and suiting action to his words, he dodged into

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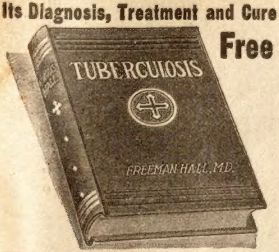
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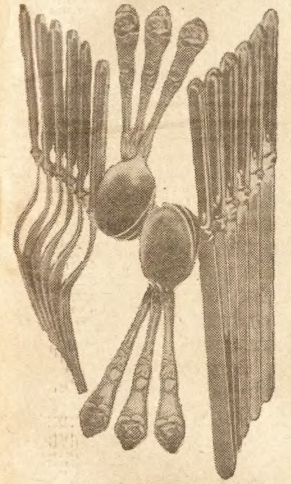
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the shadow of the trees and sneaked away, still heaping maledictions upon Nelly Brewster's head.

CHAPTER VI.
A GALLANT RESCUE.

It was not long before the young prisoner on board the Charon became somewhat of a favorite with his enemies. Peter was a fine performer on the flute, and when this information reached Captain Dacres he resolved to test his merits. Peter was summoned into that officer's cabin, and in a few moments was astonishing his audience with his wonderful skill.

This was the day after his arrival on board the warship.

"You play like a master," exclaimed Captain Dacres, pleased with the performance. "If you were not Rebel, I would enlist you at once, in order that I might have a musician with me all the time."

"But I might not play the airs you like," smiled Peter in reply.

"Oh, as to that we would put up with the ones you can play for the beauty of the music. You are not the only prisoner we have."

The young patriot professed astonishment.

"We have six Rebel officers on board," continued the Captain. "They are kept in their own quarters, but we allow them a little exercise on deck."

"How do they like their confinement?" queried Peter.

"They would prefer being with the Rebel Washington just now," was the reply. "But they won't have that pleasure, and the chances are that we will soon have a shipload of prisoners, for Cornwallis is going to turn the tables on the Virginian, and then the war will be over."

"I should like to see my fellow prisoners," ventured Peter, "but of course will not get the opportunity."

"I'll let you have a peek at them this very night," was the reply. "I guess you're not likely to run off with them."

The boy laughed heartily at this sally, and presently Captain Dacres spoke in undertones to his second officer. That worthy retired, but in a short time reappeared, followed by several sailor guards who brought up from below the Charon's captives.

They were handsome and resolute-looking men, who showed their spirit in their looks, and Peter watched them covertly from his station on the main deck. The prisoners did not pay much attention to him, as they were marched back and forth in regular exercise, and after half an hour of this sort of practice they were led back.

"Nice-looking fellows, eh?" said Captain Dacres, looking at Peter. Don't you think Washington would give a good deal to have them with him just now?"

"No doubt he would, but perhaps the prisoners would rather be here than take the risks of battle."

"You don't seem to set much store on the bravery of Rebel soldiers," the British captain laughed, whereupon Peter hastened to say:

"I did not mean what you think. But why haven't they been exchanged?"

"Because they weren't captured in battle, but in a raid, and we don't hold such fellows for regular exchange. The tall man is the noted Captain Gallion, who defeated some of our men and took from them a herd of Rebel cattle they had just secured. We needed the beef very badly, and Lord Cornwallis says there is no exchange for him."

"I haven't heard the prisoners making any noise," observed Peter shrewdly. "From their silence one would not suspect their presence on the vessel."

"They are confined in a room right next to yours," returned Captain Dacres. "They play chess nearly all the time, and that is why you haven't heard them."

When Peter went back to his quarters he reflected on the officer's last words, then tapped lightly on the wall.

At first there was no response, but at last he heard a subdued voice.

"Who's there?" it asked.

"A prisoner like yourselves," ventured Peter.

"When did you come aboard?"

"Not many hours ago. I am Peter Halket of Yorktown."

"A plain citizen? And pray, Master Halket, what are you charged with?"

"Just plain treason to the King, I suppose," answered the boy. "I caught a spy and handed him over to the young Marquis de Lafayette, but the scamp turned the tables on me, and here I am under his majesty's flag and on board one of his warships."

"Ho! a companion in misery," came the answering laugh through the wall.

"I got here a little sooner than I expected," resumed the youth, after a short pause. "I intended to come on board, but not as a prisoner. I intended to attempt your rescue."

"Not alone?"

"I thought of spying out the situation, and then going back for assistance. But here I am, cooped up like yourselves; but for all that I don't think we need despair."

"You have a boy's voice."

"I am a boy, the one you may have seen on deck when you were exercising."

"Are you closely guarded?"

"Not very close. The Captain has been giving me some privileges because I tickled his ears with the flute."

"Oh!"

"I find that I can unlock my door with a bent nail. I have tried it several times without failing."

"That is more than we can do. But if we could get into your room we might——"

"The partition doesn't seem so very thick," interrupted Peter. "Your knives ——"

"You don't suppose these rascally redcoats have permitted us to keep our knives?"

"Of course they would not be so lenient," Peter hastened to say. "They've been a little cleverer with me. I've got my knife."

"Good! Suppose you tackle the partition and see what you can do with a good keen blade."

Peter acted at once upon the suggestion, and for two hours he toiled as he had never toiled before. The wall seemed at first unyielding, but perseverance finally won the day, and at last the prisoners stood in Peter's room.

"Is the Charon well guarded?" he eagerly inquired.

"So far as we have been permitted to observe it is well patrolled. These redcoats are determined to keep us in durance while our comrades have cooped up Lord Cornwallis. If we could only reach the Charon's boats we would give these fellows the slip."

Peter volunteered to slip upon deck and take observation, and in a few minutes was snugly ensconced behind some cordage there with every sense on the alert. His was a dangerous mission, for should he be discovered, not only would his privileges be curtailed, but he might be tried by stern law and hanged at the yardarm for attempting to liberate prisoners of war.

The night was quite dark. The measured tread of the deck sentry came half-muffled to his ears, and now and then he caught a fleeting glimpse of this personage as he tramped his beat.

"We can overpower one guard," thought the boy. "Six to one ought to turn the tables in our favor," and he crept back to his little room.

Captain Gallion was eager for the fray, and he soon inspired his companions with his undaunted spirit.

"How many lights are there on deck?" he asked Peter.

"One, at the mainmast," was the reply.

"That's good. Now, boys, for liberty and revenge!"

With catlike movements the prisoners glided from the room and made their way up the ladder.

"The guard!" whispered watchful Captain Gallion, as he made ready for a leap. "Follow me, men."

The seven rushed forward. Captain Gallion felled the unsuspecting sentry and deliberately threw him half-strangled overboard. It was all over in the twinkling of an eye. But quick as the forager was, he had not quite silenced the guard, for ere the body struck the water a wild cry rose from his throat, and it was instantly responded to in different parts of the vessel.

There was a clatter of feet, forms came up the ladders, and while some of the prisoners attacked one of the boats, the others turned to fight off their assailants. The boat, released at last, dropped into the water beside the ship and the patriots scrambled over the side.

"Away!" responded Captain Gallion, erect in the stern of the boat. "We are all here. Not a minute more in the shadow of this prison ship. But where is the boy, Peter?"

Blank horror took possession of the men in the boat. They looked on every side. Peter was not among them!

(Continued next week.)

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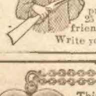

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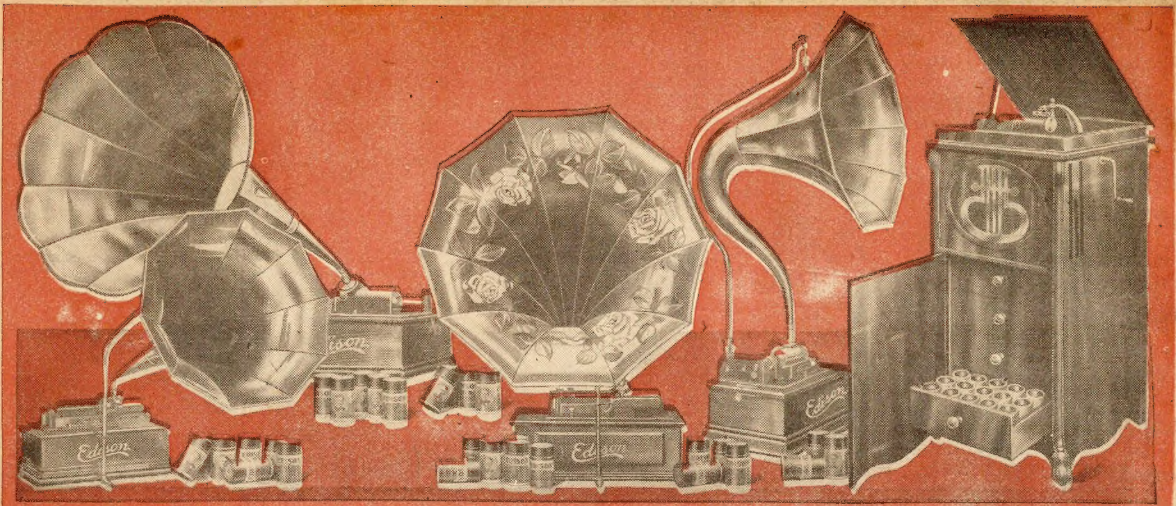

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